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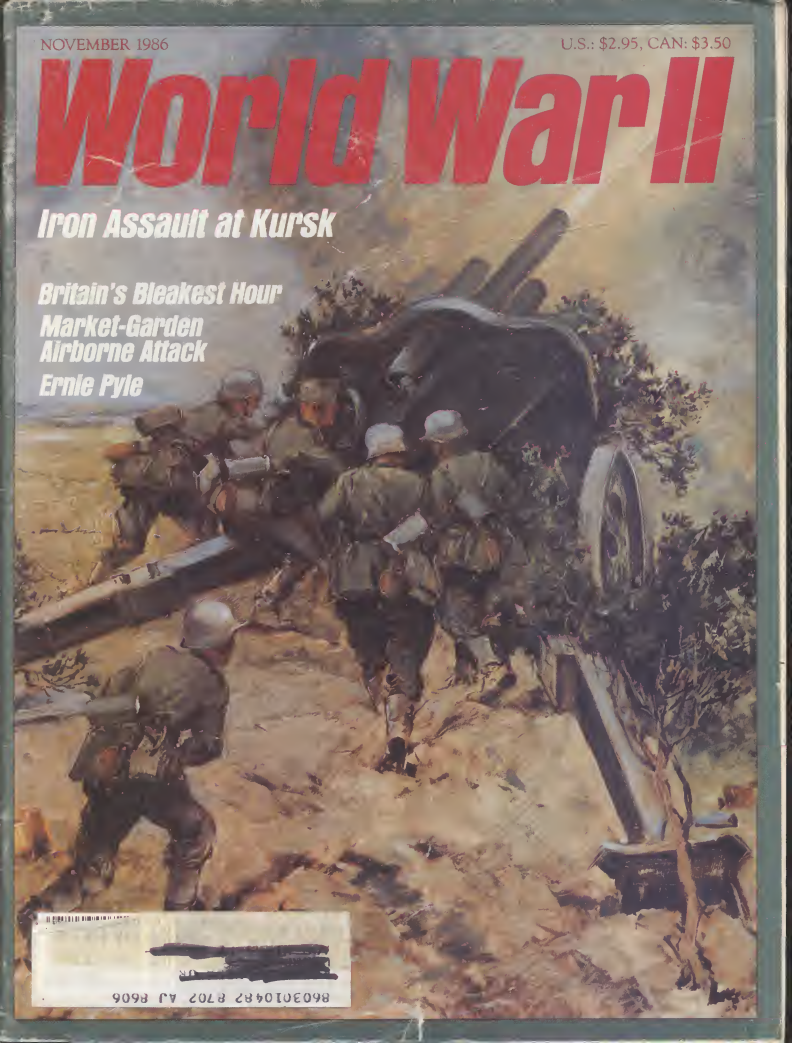
World War II

Iron Assault at Kursk

Britain's Bleakest Hour

Market-Garden Airborne Attack

Ernie Pyle



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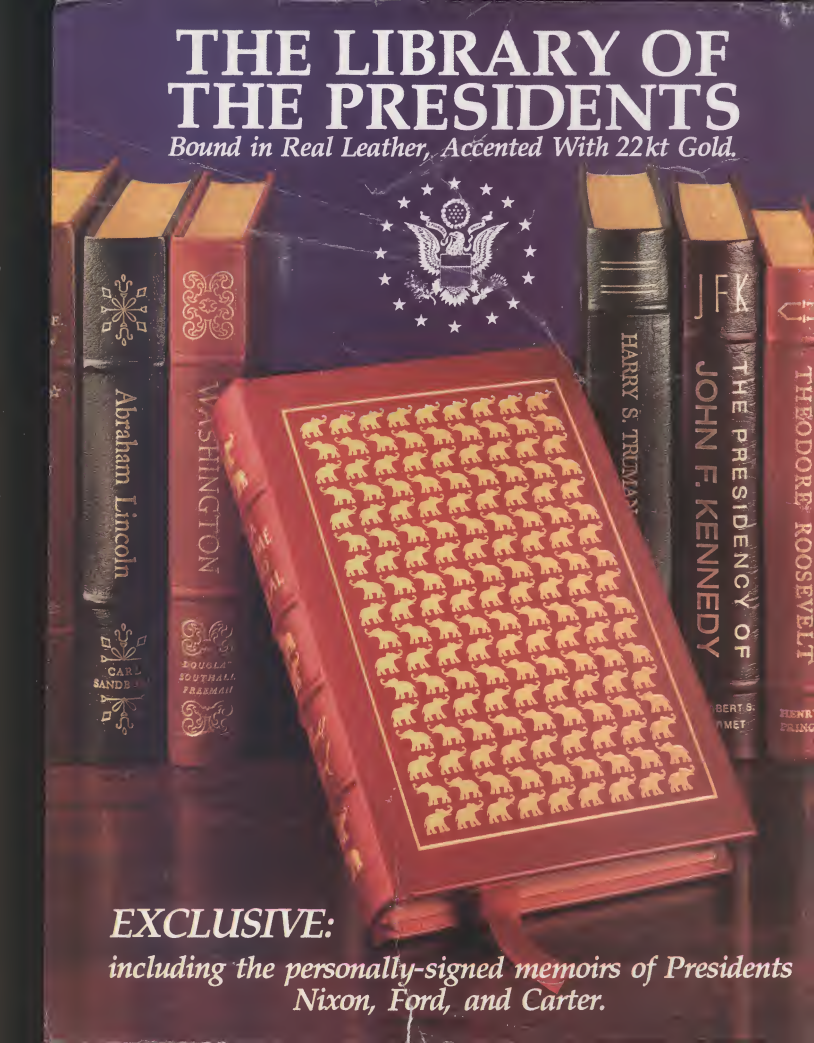

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World War II

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As German and Russian tanks rolled into opposite ends of the corridor, collision was inevitable. To both sides, the clash over the Kursk salient itself had seemed somewhat inevitable, too. Still, Hitler took the gamble.

COVER: A German artillery crew fires one of a battery of 105mm howitzers during the *Blitzkrieg* that rolled through Poland in September 1939. Despite the advent of the tank and the dive-bomber (both new types of "mobile artillery"), field guns and howitzers still retained their supremacy in all World War II armies as the battlefield pulverizer *par excellence*—Stalin's description of artillery as the "God of War" was certainly true in World War II. German war art by Albert Reich. ABOVE: A German combat patrol in Russia. The machine-gunner is about to fire his MG-34 (note the drum clip on the lefthand side of the weapon). Painting by Peter Paul Etz.

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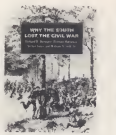

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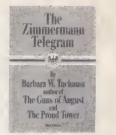

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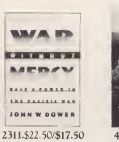

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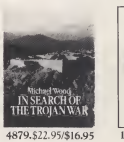

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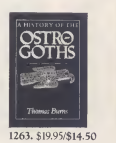

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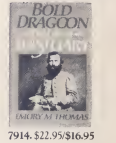

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In great speeches or in small circumstance, Winston Churchill always had memorable words to say.

Whether at sea with his beloved armed forces or on more familiar, dry ground, Churchill hardly ever was at a loss for words.

However one may construe the remarks of Winston Churchill, or divine his true motivations (as in our interpretive story, Page 26), his utterances on the subject of the moment certainly had a language and imagery all his own. He had during World War II, for instance, a great many things to say beyond his more famous lines such as the pledge that the British would fight on the beaches, in the fields, in the hills and in the streets.

Lesser-known but just as pithy is his remark in 1943 on the merits of a proposed campaign in Burma: "Going into the swampy jungles to fight the Japanese is like going into the water to fight a shark."

Then there was his entertaining thought in reaction to an early-war meeting in Berlin of Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and his German counterpart, Joachim von Ribbentrop. As C. L. Sulzberger recounted the episode in his post-war book, *World War II*, "On that night [November 13, 1940], Molotov had been bargaining with Ribbentrop for spheres of influence in a conquered world." A raid by the British RAF, however, forced the two ministers to seek cover. "But Ribbentrop assured his guest that Britain was finished."

Molotov himself had a memorable reply. "If that is so, why are we in this shelter, and whose are these bombs which fall?"

The irrepressible Churchill, however, had the last word, it seems here, with his remark: "We had heard about the conference beforehand and, though not invited to join in the discussion, did not wish to be entirely left out of the proceedings."

Churchill could also give vent to controlled wrath. "This wicked man," he labeled Hitler upon the sudden bombing of English cities in 1940. And further: "This monstrous product of former wrongs and shame, has now resolved to break our famous island race by a process of indiscriminate slaughter and destruction."

Did the Prime Minister, a savvy politician as well as a national leader and symbol of his nation's bulldog determination, always feel what he had to say? When it came to the defense of his "famous island race," there would seem to be little doubt that he spoke with real, deeply-held feeling. But how about those Bolshevik Russians once allied with the monstrous Hitler himself? The story is that as Churchill dictated a speech to the Russian people in response to Hitler's invasion of their country, real tears coursed down his cheeks.

Churchill in his long lifetime naturally had quite a bit to say about many things, many of those utterances still memorable. Although his finest hour as image-maker was in World War II, it may sometimes be forgotten that he once was a newspaper correspondent covering the adventures of a 19th-century British empire in places such as South Africa, India, the Sudan and Omdurman. Sometime early in the 20th century, though, he made his choice when it came to attendance at news-making events. "It is better to be making the news than taking it," he had decided; "to be an actor rather than a critic."

By the time of World War II and all its tragedy, ordeal and responsive heroism—including that of the unbowed spirit who led the British — he certainly had become a maker of news rather than a "taker."

Even in private company his were utterances that mesmerized his listeners. "I marvelled how he could appear so carefree with the enormous load of anxieties on his shoulders," wrote a British corps commander after a dinner party at Chequers in the summer of 1940, Britain's most difficult hour, "and I wish I could remember some of the splendid sentences that rolled off his tongue."

There was one moment during World War II, however, when even the ebullient Churchill apparently was rendered speechless. As was his wont, recalls Hastings in his *Oxford Book of Military Anecdotes*, he had spontaneously called a section of the War Office, this one dealing with the Mid-East, without any prior arrangement to confer with its chief officer. Simply asking if he had the right office on the line, Churchill then began a round of questions.

"How do you think the operations are going in Syria?" he asked.

"Oh," came the answer, "I think everything is going all right."

Churchill probed further. How about the turning movement being executed by the French?

Again the answer: "Oh, that seems to be all right."

Finally Churchill asked to whom he was speaking.

"Corporal Jones, Duty Clerk," came the answer.

That was the end of the conversation.

C.B.K.

World War II

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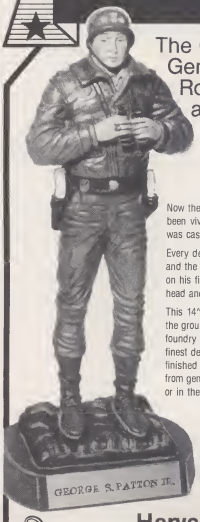
Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.



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DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED

The top-secret intercept mission avenging Pearl Harbor was authorized by the President.

By Dennis Beck

Just before midnight on April 17, 1943, Major John W. Mitchell assembled his pilots on a hill overlooking Guadalcanal's Henderson Field. As he looked out over his 40 volunteers, ground crews on the field below feverishly were fitting new 310-gallon drop tanks to 18 select P-38s.

Mitchell pointed his flashlight at the list of names pinned to a board outside the briefing tent.

"I wish I could take you all," he said, "but this is it: the attack group—the shooters—are Lanphier, Barber, McLanahan and Moore. I'll lead the cover flight: Jacobson, Holmes, Hine, Canning, Goerke, Kittel, Stratton, Whittaker, Graebner, Long, Anglin, Smith, Ames."

Major Mitchell snapped off his flashlight.

In the darkness he said, "We're going after Admiral Yamamoto."

What would prove to be the longest and most spectacular interception of the Pacific War had actually begun five days earlier and thousands of miles away. At 5:55 p.m. on April 13 at the Wahiawa radio station near Pearl Harbor, a U.S. Navy radioman had taken down an enciphered Japanese message sent from Rabaul, the Japanese bastion located on New Britain in the South Pacific. From Wahiawa the message was sent to Combat Intelligence headquarters at Pearl Harbor and fed into IBM code-breaking machines. These highly secret machines rendered the Japanese JN-25 code into plain text Japanese—once translated, Naval Intelligence personnel found themselves staring at the forthcoming itinerary of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet.

On the morning of April 18, they learned, the most highly respected flag officer in the Japanese Navy planned to make an inspection tour of his forward air bases. The itinerary, giving precise times of arrival and departure, included Buin airfield on Bougainville, which was within striking reach of American long-range fighters based at Guadalcanal.

Cannon and machine-gun slugs drill the Mitsubishi G4M1 ("Betty") bomber carrying Japanese Admiral Yamamoto to Bougainville as American Army flyer Rex Barber's P-38 Lightning strafes the Japanese plane. Other Lightnings are meanwhile moving to intercept the accompanying Japanese Zero fighters.

The following morning Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander of the Pacific Fleet, was handed a copy of the intercepted message by his intelligence officer, Commander Edwin Layton. Asked Nimitz in his soft Texas drawl, "Do we try to get him?"

Both Layton and Nimitz knew that shooting down Yamamoto would be an extremely serious blow to the Japanese. There was simply no other officer of the same stature to replace him. As the force behind the attack on Pearl Harbor, Yamamoto was seen as a hero by both the fleet and the Japanese public. His death would cause tremendous damage to enemy morale.

Was the attempt worth the danger of alerting the Japanese to the fact that their codes had been broken? Both Layton and Nimitz concluded that it was. As a cover story, Layton suggested, and Nimitz agreed, that all personnel involved in the project should be briefed that Australian coastwatchers were responsible for the information.

So important to the Americans was maintaining the secrecy of the code-breaking operation that the final decision could come only from Washington. Accordingly, when Major John Mitchell of the U.S. Army's 339th Fighter Squadron on Guadalcanal was handed a top secret order on April 17, it read in part: "Squadron 339 P-38 must at all costs reach and destroy. President attaches extreme importance this operation."

The order was signed by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.

Planning for the mission was left to Mitchell. He worked alone at first in his tent, plotting his course on a sheet of paper spread on a blanket. The point of interception would be about 320 miles northwest of Henderson Field. Since several Japanese-occupied islands lay in between, Mitchell would have to fly an arc to the west, out over the sea, to avoid being seen by enemy coastwatchers.

The problems were obvious enough. The course would have to be flown with absolute accuracy by dead reckoning—an error of a degree on any of

Continued on page 56

Explore the Twisted World of the NAZIS.

Master of hate, Joseph Goebbels was the intellectual in the Nazi hierarchy.

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The GI's best booster was a little guy twice the average GI's age.

By Bill D. Ross

"I sit around with them," he once wrote home from North Africa, "and they get to telling stories, both funny and serious, about their battle."

Of course, they were disappointed when he couldn't, for obvious security reasons, name their outfit in his stories. "They are all proud of it and would like the folks at home to know what they've done."

He sat around with them, marched with them, ducked enemy fire with them, and then wrote their stories for the folks back home.

In North Africa, for instance, after chow one night, the order to move out comes by field telephone. It had been expected.

Without a sound: "They move like wraiths in single file down tortuous goat paths, walking slowly, feeling the ground with their toes, stumbling and hushfully cussing. They will walk all night and attack before dawn."

Ernie Pyle, the American GI's favorite press agent and chronicler, is seen here in a characteristic pose, looking like one of the "dogfaces" he wrote about.

He sees them as ghosts—unseen, unheard from three feet away. But then the big guns speak up, "and for just an instant you see a long slow line of dark-helmeted forms silhouetted in the flash." They then are swallowed in darkness and silence again. "And somehow you are terribly moved."

This was—these were the words of—Ernest Taylor Pyle. Few people would recognize the full name. But as Ernie Pyle, he was idolized by millions of GIs and their loved ones back home.

Beginning with desert and mountain fighting by American troops in North Africa in 1943, he almost constantly was at the front where fighting was heaviest and danger the greatest. He was with the combat soldiers in Sicily and Italy; with them on the landing in southern France; in the give-no-quarter battles that roared across western Europe and signaled the doom and downfall of Hitler's Third Reich.

Slight of stature, plagued with nagging minor but debilitating illnesses, wracked by marital problems back home, never confident of his writing ability, he reported in a folksy, low-key and non-flamboyant way—more like a letter a GI would write home than in the words of a war correspondent—what war was all about from the narrow and deeply personal view of men doing the fighting and dying.

Forty-three at the time, he was more than twice the age of most GIs and had years on almost all of his correspondent colleagues. "I'm too old for all this crap," he often told Hal Boyle, his Associated Press sidekick who had been alongside Pyle through many close calls.

Ernie Pyle was one of a kind. He lived with those he wrote about. He wrote about their gripes and misery and fears. He dug foxholes with them, lived in the dirt and mud with them, and wrote about the color of the dirt and mud, about the sounds and smells of battle, about dirty socks and trench foot and lousy chow, about the suffering and bravery of the men. He told how they lived and, too often, how they died. He wrote of their hopes and dreams and of their dignity.

When World War II exploded for Americans with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Ernie Pyle already was well-known to readers of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain. He wrote a syndicated travel column, an often whimsical and always personal melange of his comings and goings across the United States.

His early career was a carbon copy of the now-extinct band of restless, vagabond newspapermen of the 1920s and '30s—several jobs, several cities, with no real goal in mind. It began in Indiana (where he was born on a farm near the hamlet of Dana) on the *La Porte Herald* when he was 22, a senior-year drop-out from the state university's school of journalism.

With each stop on the road to ultimate fame, Ernie Pyle learned what it takes to be a very competent journeyman reporter, writer and deskman. By the mid-thirties he had earned his stripes in the big leagues on papers in New York and Washington.

As the United States slowly recovered from the debacle of December 7, 1941, and the subsequent disasters inflicted by Japan's military juggernaut as it swept over island after island in the South Pacific, Pyle's travel column caught fire. Americans, it seemed,

Continued on page 62

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WWNOVR

Britain's homely Sten was a favorite for Commandos and Resistance fighters behind German lines.

By J. David Truby

In May 1940 a faint scud of smoke floated over the English Channel following the British Army's miraculous escape at Dunkirk. Even as a ragtag home fleet ferried battered survivors back to the Home Islands, retread reservists and elderly volunteers huddled under their pie-pan helmets, staring east over the barrels of their ancient, World War I-era Lewis guns, waiting for the widely anticipated Nazi invasion.

"We have less than 2,000 automatic weapons in all England to face Hitler's barbaric hordes," a worried Winston Churchill hastened to tell his staff. "Until we can get these marvelous new automatic carbines into our lads' hands, we'll just hold them off with what we have."

Barely 2,000 Bren guns, plus a smaller number of Thompson submachine guns from America, existed in England to face the predicted invasion force rumored to be on the heels of the Dunkirk fleet. Quickly, the British recalled 85,000 long-retired Lewis guns from their deep, Cosmoline resting place.

Maquisards *of the "Tito" company of the French Resistance are shown here armed with Sten guns, "potato masher" stick grenades and other weapons. The British supplied Resistance and guerrilla forces with thousands of Sten guns—prized and used by partisan groups in both European and Asian countries.*

At the same time, British ordnance was at work trying to bring an oddball, before-its-time concept into production—that radically new submachine gun design Churchill had called an "automatic carbine."

This highly simplified weapon was known officially as Project N.O.T. 40/1 and was a joint production of Major Reginald V. Shepard and Harold J. Turpin. Major (later Colonel) Shepard had retired from the army in the 1930s and was director of the Birmingham Small Arms Works, while Turpin was a design engineer in the department of the Chief Superintendent of Design at Enfield, a small arms factory that was located near London.

For a working project name, military officials chose the first initial from the two designers' last names and the first two letters from the local ordnance factory at Enfield: STEN. The name meant nothing then, but since that time, the Sten gun has seen active combat duty all over the world—and it was major help to the Allies of World War II on the beaches, in the trenches, towns and villages in every theater of operation.

If the German *blitzkrieg* fathered modern warfare, then Dunkirk midwifed the Sten. Faced with the loss of most of their automatic weapons, the British were in life-or-death need of an inexpensive weapon which could be turned out as a stamped, mass-produced product in small shops.

Actually, the Sten gun was conceived in theory even before Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler began dueling each other in 1940. From its beginning this mass-production submachine gun was deemed so ugly as to give junkyard scrap a bad name. The Sten was called a lot of unflattering names because of its ugly, pipe-fitting design and appearance, among them "Winston's Cake Decorator," "The Plumber's Delight," "The Stench Gun," "Junkyard Derelict," "Pipefitters Reject," or "Limey Lube Pipe."

Based solely on appearance, the derogatory names for the Sten were understandable. The British prided themselves on hefty, quality-produced weapons with weight, lots of wood, solid steel, and finely oiled precision operation. The ugly plumber's pipe called the Sten gun was not considered an acceptably attractive weapon.

In January 1941, nonetheless, the chief of the Enfield Design Department privately told selected military officials that a greatly simplified submachine gun had been developed and prototypes of it produced. This was the Sten Mark I, tested at Enfield on January 10, 1941. Ten days later it was successfully tried at the School of Musketry at Hythe. Officials quickly saw the new weapon's major advantages: small size, lightness, ease and low cost of manufacture. The prototype Sten guns passed all their official trials and were

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quickly accepted by the firepower-starved British military.

Those Sten guns were the first small arms to be constructed completely from stampings and fabrications, although the concept had been tried initially by the Germans. The Sten was also the first weapon whose component parts were manufactured by a variety of subcontractors, then assembled in one central location. It was truly a modular, assembly-line weapon. In England, the weapon was manufactured primarily by the Birmingham Small Arms Works (BSA) under stringent government contract.

From the very beginning, the Sten was designed with simplicity of operation and maintenance in mind. Mechanically, it was a classic example of a blowback-type automatic weapon. The barrel was short and enclosed in a tubular metal housing known as the receiver. This receiver was a steel tube housing a heavy bolt-firing pin and a strong return spring. Firing from the open-bolt position, the heavy bolt was released forward when the trigger was pulled. The bolt stripped a cartridge from the magazine, feeding it into the barrel and ramming the firing pin into the 9mm cartridge primer, firing the cartridge.

The blast blew back the bolt, taking out the empty casing and ejecting it. As long as the trigger was held back, the strong return spring slammed the bolt forward again, repeating the process automatically. The firing process stopped when pressure was removed from the trigger or the ammunition supply was exhausted.

The Sten's only machined parts were the bolt and barrel. Everything else was produced as a metal stamping or pressing—very simple and inexpensive. A stamped metal stock with a large retaining cap at one end enclosed the receiver tube, completing the basic weapon. The only other mechanics was a highly simplified trigger assembly. Only five weeks were allotted from contract letting to initial delivery of weapons. BSA made good on the contract, beating the deadline by a week, and delivered the first 25 guns at the end of August.

BSA's main wartime factory was located at Tyseley, where production by the end of September 1941 was 200 guns. The following month 1,000 Stens were produced, while in November the figure doubled. By July 1942, thousands of the handy Sten guns had been delivered, with 2,000 being produced per month.

Between 100,000 and 125,000 Mark I Sten guns were produced by

A "Tommy" clutching a Sten gun leads a patrol on a sniper hunt through the ruins of the Yamethin, Burma, railway station in April 1945. Although the Sten gun is traditionally identified with commando and resistance units, it also was valued for house-to-house fighting by regular soldiers who nicknamed it the "room broom."

BSA and the Enfield facility. By 1942, the improved model, the Mark II, was the standard British production submachine gun of the war; approximately 2,350,000 were built by 1944. In addition to the Tyseley site, a number of other plants were turning out Sten guns at about the same rate. Production reached a peak in 1943, when 47,000 weapons were turned out in a week's period. Total wartime production in England was approximately 3,825,000 Sten guns.

In addition to the BSA and Enfield facilities, Sten guns were produced at the Royal Ordnance Arsenal at Fazakerly and in Canada at the Long Beach Arsenal. Nearly 20,000 Sten guns were turned out each week at Fazakerly for Commonwealth forces in the Pacific theater of operations.

The firing rate of the Sten gun was about 600 rounds per minute. Although a 32-round box magazine was issued, men whose lives depended upon a zero-defects weapon say they never put more than 30 rounds in a clip. The gun's weight with loaded magazine was 8.9 pounds, and the length of the Sten Mark II was 30.3 inches. As with most weapons in its class, the Sten had an effective range of about 100 yards.

The Mark II Sten first saw action at Dieppe—although the raid itself was generally regarded as a military fiasco, the new commando concepts and weapons tested, including the Sten, came through with solid performance ratings. Until that time, British troops had been using the limited numbers of Mark I Stens and American-made Thompson submachine guns.

The Sten guns were not without defect, though the only serious problem (which plagued all the models) was the magazine. The major difficulty with the magazine was the design of the lips and feed area, which were subject to deformation, causing feeding problems. Despite serious and continual design attempts to correct this problem, misfeed caused by magazine damage continued throughout the war.

Despite the feed problems, British and colonial forces, and other Allied troops, had an insatiable appetite for Sten guns. Most veterans simply tossed away a bad magazine if it jammed their gun and quickly loaded a fresh one.

As the Normandy invasion planning grew more precise in 1944, more attention was paid to the need for clearing towns and villages—house to house warfare. The Sten was declared a champion in this match, a proven winner from commando raids and Resistance use.

Peter Young, the British Commando leader, made the nickname "Room Broom" famous. Gregory Dunne, formerly a sergeant with the Scots Guards, carried both the MkII and the MkV Stens. "I liked it as it was light, carried well on my back and I felt more secure with the Sten than I did a pistol," he later recalled. "I had some occasion to use it in our house-clearing run through France in 1944 . . . later, too, in Germany. I'm still here and some of their people are not, so I have no raps against the old Sten."

Despite those who claimed otherwise, many troops thought the Sten to be quite accurate for its combat role. Colonel Robert Young, who used a Sten frequently as a young lieutenant during WWII, says: "Sometimes we'd get bogged down at good range from the Germans, 100 yards or more and I would easily pop away with my MkV and do very well . . . more than just keep their heads down . . . it's all in marksmanship." Young was credited with clearing out seven different machine-gun emplacements by himself in Germany in the spring of 1945. His weapon: A Sten MkV.

In addition to their use by standard troop units, the Sten guns saw their share of irregular operations, too. In the beginning, the few operational Mark I weapons were issued to British Commando units for field testing. After Dieppe and other small-unit actions, the Mark II was issued to regular army units. As stockpiles increased, the British began to airdrop thousands of Sten guns, accessories and ammunition to Resistance forces in Europe and Asia.

With the arrival of the Sten guns, Resistance forces quickly gave up their

Continued on page 60

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Success While Others Fail

The largely American airborne assault would be MARKET, and the roadbound thrust would be the GARDEN in Montgomery's plan to hit the Germans with concentrated forces at a critical point. Already on the ropes, the Germans surely would collapse. Or so the Allies thought.

By Michael J. King

In the eighth-century Dutch city of Nijmegen, a young American Army major peered across the wide Waal River from the ninth floor of a 20th-century power plant. From his vantage point, Major Julian A. Cook, 27, could see the broad, 400-yard expanse of the river. He could see the flat ground just beyond; the rise of a solid embankment at the end of the barren flats, and—800 yards beyond the dike embankment—a German-manned fort. His binoculars enabled him to see German troops deployed on the 15- to 20-foot embankment, along which ran a road.

Nothing in that vista could have been called encouraging. "Somebody," thought Cook, "has come up with a nightmare."

The nightmare was that his 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, must cross the swift-flowing river in broad daylight and storm the German positions beyond. Worse, his airborne troops were to make the river crossing in flimsy, fold-up boats of canvas and plywood. His men had never seen the boats nor trained in anything like them. Worst of all, with all else in readiness, the boats hadn't even arrived.

The assault's objective was the seizure of Nijmegen's two bridges across the Waal, and originally the crossing had been scheduled for 1 p.m. With Cook growling, "Where are the damn boats?" however, H-hour was pushed back to 3 p.m. At exactly 2:30 p.m., British Typhoon aircraft would arrive to rocket and strafe the north banks of the Waal. At about the same time, 30 Sherman tanks accompanying the Anglo-American forces deep in Holland for Operation MARKET-GARDEN would mount an embankment on the river's south shore and begin their own pounding of the German positions across the river.

Adding to the British tank bombardment would be the 82nd's own artillery and mortar fire—for the American paratroopers, the support would be both helpful and heartening. But still, that river loomed ahead, naked and wide.

"At first when we were briefed, we thought they were joking," later recalled one of the 82nd's officers, 2nd Lt. John Holabird. "The odds were very much against us" was the reaction of another, Captain Henry Baldwin Keep. "It sounded impossible."

So impossible that Protestant chaplain (Captain) Delbert Kuehl obtained permission to accompany the assault troops. "I felt if ever the men needed me, it was on this operation," he later said.

Unknown to Cook and his men, just 11 miles to the north, British forces in the Dutch city of Arnhem, were caught up in a nightmare of their own. Trapped by overwhelming German forces and barely holding out, they, on this third day of Operation MARKET-GARDEN, were dependent for their relief upon immediate seizure of the Nijmegen bridges and fast Allied advance from there. The burden was on Cook.

And still the folding, 19-foot boats hadn't arrived. To Cook, as he waited and fumed, the entire operation appeared as if "we were being asked to make an Omaha Beach landing all by ourselves."

Two o'clock came and went, the British Typhoon aircraft well on their way by now for the planned air strikes. To the south, though, three trucks carrying the vital boats were drawing close. Through the night and, now, the day, they had been jolting their way north as part of engineering convoys sharing a single, supply-jammed road with combat equipment and troops. The trucks had picked their way through embattled towns, while avoiding *Luftwaffe* attacks from the air. Cook, in the meantime, did his best to lift the spirits of those around him by "threatening" to stand erect in his boat on the Waal in emulation of George Washington crossing the Delaware.

At 2:30, right on time, the Typhoons arrived and began their rocket and strafing attack across the river. The British tanks rumbled forward to prepare for their shelling and to provide smoke screening the amphibious assault. And then, in the midst of the noisy eruption, the three trucks finally arrived. Just 20 minutes were left to assemble and load the boats for the 3 o'clock amphibious assault by American paratroopers.

The wonder is that they could be ready in time. But they were. In minutes they were crossing a naked expanse of water so churned by bullets and shrapnel that one of Cook's men was reminded, oddly, of "a school of mackerel on the feed."

On the south bank behind them, one onlooker was Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick ("Boy") Browning, commander of the

An American paratrooper drops from his troop-carrier plane in approved "tight" jump posture, to be held until the static line releases his chute. The sea of parachutes in the background indicates the scope of the airborne assault by the 45,000-man First Allied Airborne Army in the Allies' Operation MARKET-GARDEN *in September of 1944.*

The pilot of an American CG-4A combat glider waits at the controls as his highly vulnerable troop-carrying craft is towed to its designated LZ (landing zone) in Holland. The CG-4A glider was constructed of steel tubing covered with fabric and carried 15 soldiers into battle at a time.

First Allied Airborne Corps that incorporated both the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. He watched, as did others on the Allied side of the river, in horrified fascination mixed with hope—hope both for the men crossing the river in a maelstrom of fire and for the British trapped at Arnhem to the north.

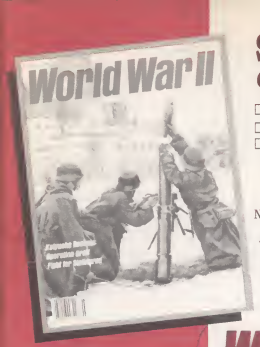
It was a critical moment for Operation MARKET-GARDEN, launched just four days before—on September 17, 1944. At that point, by sharp contrast, the Allies had stormed into occupied Holland with full confidence in their ability to prevail, rather than with mere hope. It was, some might say, an unrealistic and overblown confidence.

Plans for an Arnhem operation, once code-named COMET, at first had been fairly limited in scope. According to them, the British 1st Airborne Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Robert ("Roy") Urquhart, and the Polish Parachute Brigade, commanded by Maj. Gen. Stanislaw Sosabowski, were to secure a bridge across the Rhine near Arnhem to open the way for Lt. Gen. Miles C. Dempsey's British Second Army. Those plans had been completed by September 7—the British and Polish troops to take part were marshalled at their airfields, and the pilots were briefed to fly the next day. A forecast of bad weather then led to the mission being delayed until September 9.

By this time, however, the Germans were on the move, too. Anticipating British Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's next drive, they were concentrating between Antwerp and Arnhem.

Field Marshal Walter Model, commanding Army Group B, established his headquarters in Arnhem itself. Two armies, the First Parachute and the Fifteenth, were assigned to him. Although the former had an imposing name and was commanded by the father of the German airborne, *Generaloberst* (Colonel General) Kurt Student, it had been formed only recently, originally with only one corps, comprised of the 176th and 719th Infantry Divisions. These were static coastal divisions manned in part by overaged, convalescing, or otherwise physically impaired men.

Student also had two *Kampfgruppen*, or provisional formations, under his command. *Kampfgruppe Chill* had been



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WWNOV6

World War II

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The Fifteenth Army, commanded by *General der Infanterie* Gustav von Zangen, added the weak 59th and 245th Infantry Divisions to the German defense. A number of additional German provisional and rear-echelon formations, which had little combat value, were also in the area.

Far more ominously for the MARKET-GARDEN planners, Model on September 3 had directed that the Fifth Panzer Army, which was retreating from France, release the 9th (*Hohenstauffen*) and 10th (*Frundsberg*) SS Panzer Divisions to the vicinity of Arnhem for rehabilitation. Two days later, Model ordered the headquarters of II SS Panzer Corps under *SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS* Willi Bittrich to the vicinity of Arnhem to direct the rehabilitation of the 9th Panzer Division. Most of the *panzer* men and vehicles would still be there when the Arnhem operation began and would serve Model well.

The overly optimistic Allies learned of the German build-up by decoding enemy messages, but their knowledge was incomplete and their interpretation of the facts less than perfect. They had little information on Student's 1st Parachute Army, did not know that elements of the Fifteenth Army were crossing the Scheldt River into the Netherlands from Belgium, and woefully underestimated their enemy's fighting ability and resolve.

Faced with the known increase in opposing German forces, however, Montgomery's headquarters delayed COMET an additional 24 hours on September 8, and then cancelled it two days later—only to replace it with a much more ambitious operation. The new operation combined an American, British and Polish airborne assault named

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The pilot of an American CG-4A combat glider waits at the controls as his highly vulnerable troop-carrying craft is towed to its designated LZ (landing zone) in Holland. The CG-4A glider was constructed of steel tubing covered with fabric and carried 15 soldiers into battle at a time.

First Allied Airborne Corps that incorporated both the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. He watched, as did others on the Allied side of the river, in horrified fascination mixed with hope—hope both for the men crossing the river in a maelstrom of fire and for the British trapped at Arnhem to the north.

It was a critical moment for Operation MARKET-GARDEN, launched just four days before—on September 17, 1944. At that point, by sharp contrast, the Allies had stormed into occupied Holland with full confidence in their ability to prevail, rather than with mere hope. It was, some might say, an unrealistic and overblown confidence.

Plans for an Arnhem operation, once code-named COMET, at first had been fairly limited in scope. According to them, the British 1st Airborne Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Robert ("Roy") Urquhart, and the Polish Parachute Brigade, commanded by Maj. Gen. Stanislaw Sosabowski, were to secure a bridge across the Rhine near Arnhem to open the way for Lt. Gen. Miles C. Dempsey's British Second Army. Those plans had been completed by September 7—the British and Polish troops to take part were marshalled at their airfields, and the pilots were briefed to fly the next day. A forecast of bad weather then led to the mission being delayed until September 9.

By this time, however, the Germans were on the move, too. Anticipating British Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's next drive, they were concentrating between Antwerp and Arnhem.

Field Marshal Walter Model, commanding Army Group B, established his headquarters in Arnhem itself. Two armies, the First Parachute and the Fifteenth, were assigned to him. Although the former had an imposing name and was commanded by the father of the German airborne, *Generaloberst* (Colonel General) Kurt Student, it had been formed only recently, originally with only one corps, comprised of the 176th and 719th Infantry Divisions. These were static coastal divisions manned in part by overaged, convalescing, or otherwise physically impaired men.

Student also had two *Kampfgruppen*, or provisional formations, under his command. *Kampfgruppe Chill* had been

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The maps show the disposition and objectives of the American forces (the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions) participating in Operation MARKET-GARDEN. TOP: After unsuccessful attempts by two of the 82nd Airborne Division's regiments to capture the crucial railroad and highway bridges over the Waal River at Nijmegen, the 504th's 1st and 3rd Battalions finally prevailed, thanks to a waterborne assault over the river that resulted in the capture of both bridges at Nijmegen. ABOVE: The three parachute infantry regiments of the 101st Airborne Division gained an initial objective within three hours of landing and had built a bridge over the Wilhelmina Canal at Son and cleared Eindhoven of Germans by D plus 1.

MARKET with a British ground attack called GARDEN under the joint name of MARKET-GARDEN.

MARKET would involve approximately 20,000 parachutists, 15,000 glider troops and 10,000 air-landed infantry, as the largest airborne operation ever conducted. It was intended to capture the most important bridges over rivers and canals along and parallel to the Antwerp-Arnhem highway from Eindhoven, Holland, to Arnhem.

Unlike the earlier Allied operations in Sicily and Normandy, the airborne MARKET would be carried out during daylight. There were sound reasons for this decision. Although antiaircraft fire might be more accurate during daylight, it could also be effective at night, as was proven in Sicily, where friendly fire accidentally downed 25 percent of the troop-carrying aircraft taking part in one night's operation.

Furthermore, the Allies respected the capability of German night-fighting aircraft enough to doubt the ability of their own fighters to protect the troop carriers in darkness. In a daylight operation, on the other hand, the Allied fighters would be better able to deal with enemy aircraft and could suppress enemy antiaircraft fire. Weighing against a night drop, too, was the fact that there would be no moon during MARKET. This would make navigation and assembly at night, already a difficult task, even more difficult.

The American 101st Airborne Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, was to land north of Eindhoven and seize key bridges over waterways in that area. In all, his men would have to take two major canal crossings and nine highway and railroad bridges along a 15-mile stretch of highway.

In addition, Brig. Gen. James M. Gavin's 82nd Airborne Division was to land farther to the north, south of Nijmegen, where it would be responsible for a ten-mile stretch of corridor. The two most important objectives in its area were the 1,500-foot highway bridge over the Maas River at Grave and the highway bridge across the Waal River at Nijmegen. In addition, Gavin's men would have to seize at least one of four highway and railroad bridges across the Maas-Waal Canal. To secure these objectives, they would have to occupy key points on Groesbeek Heights, a partially wooded, 300-foot, eight-mile ridgeline two miles southeast of Nijmegen. The ridge not only dominated important bridges in the area, but also stood in the way of enemy forces that might try to counterattack out of the adjacent German forest, the Reichswald.

Eleven miles north of Nijmegen, British General Roy Urquhart's 1st Airborne Division, reinforced by Sosabowski's Polish Parachute Brigade, was to capture Arnhem and its bridges across the Neder Rijn, or Lower Rhine, and prepare airstrips to receive the British 52nd (Lowlands) Airlanding Division.

While the American airborne assault (MARKET) was securing the bridges along the Eindhoven-Arnhem highway, the British were to carry out their ground attack, GARDEN. According to that plan, Lt. Gen. Brian G. Horrocks' British 30 Corps would drive up the highway and use the bridges taken by the airborne. The distance from Horrocks' jumping-off point near the Belgian-Dutch border to Arnhem was 64 miles and was to be covered in two days. Due to the many water obstacles in the area, however, the attack would be roadbound.

But now came a crucial decision, one made by Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton, Commander of the First Allied Airborne Army. MARKET required that 45,000 troops be moved by air, but the aircraft available, which were based in England, could only carry about 18,000. The aircraft

shortage might have been partially overcome by having the planes fly more than once on D-day, but Brereton ruled that no air crew should fly more than one mission per day because each round trip would require a flight of approximately 500 miles. Flying two missions a day was not only theoretically feasible, but had been done over a similar distance during ANVIL-DRAGOON, the landing the Allies had conducted in southern France the previous month. Nonetheless, Brereton stood firmly by his rule of one mission per day.

His troop-carrier commanders encouraged him in the decision because it would allow them enough time between missions to rest and for their aircraft to be maintained and have battle damage repaired. On the other hand, it meant that only a third of the 45,000 troops scheduled to take part in MARKET could be carried by air on D-day. The remaining 27,000 would have to be carried on later lifts spread over several days. Not only would the Allies' initial assault thus have to be made by fewer troops than might be needed, but the arrival of additional troops would be contingent upon good weather. This was a risky assumption in a part of Europe where the weather always is very changeable.

The flaw in Brereton's decision was compounded in the plan for the Arnhem operation. The advisability of going to Arnhem at all was questioned by Browning, who told Montgomery he thought that objective "a bridge too far." If the Rhine bridge at Arnhem were to be included, however, he and Urquhart thought it would make sense to drop the attacking troops as close as possible to the objective. The Royal Air Force (RAF) argued against this, maintaining that the bridge was likely to be well defended by flak and that the terrain around Arnhem was not suitable for glider landings. Consequently, the airborne's drop zones (DZs) and the glider troops' landing zones (LZs) would be six to eight miles from the bridge. By the time the British could get to the bridge, the Germans would be aware of their presence, and the element of surprise would be entirely lost.

Due to Brereton's prohibition against the crews of his troop-carrying aircraft flying more than one mission per day, Urquhart could only land approximately half of one glider regiment and one parachute regiment on D-day. This was about 5,000 men, or less than half of his division. Furthermore, the glider troops were to remain at the airhead to protect it, leaving only the parachutists to take the bridge. The regiment assigned to take the bridge had not been in battle recently, and many of its men were replacements who had no combat experience. Thus, out of a British division reinforced with a Polish parachute brigade, only one regiment of largely green parachutists would be available to seize the bridge at Arnhem on D-day. Even this figure was based upon the optimistic assumption that nothing would happen to prevent all three battalions of that regiment from reaching the bridge at full strength.

Brereton's choice of Browning as commander of the airborne forces during the drop was another controversial decision. Not only had Browning never commanded airborne troops making a combat jump, but the majority of the troops taking part in MARKET would be American. Some believed that Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, who had formerly commanded the 82nd Airborne Division and was then commanding the XVIIIth Airborne Corps, should have been chosen. However, Brereton kept Browning in command. He provided, however, that after all three airborne divisions and the airlanding division had entered combat, the force would divide into two airborne corps.

TOP: American infantrymen advance behind what appears to be a Stuart (M-5) tank. Although the Stuart tanks were considered obsolete by 1944, a number still served with American infantry units late in the war in Europe. ABOVE: Private Campbell Snowden, a U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer, stands guard over 14 Germans he and two other photographers captured in the airborne assault of Holland. As Allied Intelligence reported, some (but only some) of the German forces in Holland at the time of MARKET-GARDEN were second-rate or rear-echelon units, their men only too happy to surrender to the Allies. Note that none of the Germans shown here is wearing the standard steel helmet.

Browning would command the British and Polish troops as 1st Airborne Corps, and Ridgway would gain control over the two American divisions as the new XVIII Airborne Corps commander.

As the planning continued and D-day approached, Dutch Resistance reported German armored units in the objective area, and identified Eindhoven and Nijmegen as reception centers for them. Eisenhower's chief of staff, Walter Bedell Smith, was concerned about the German presence and, with Ike's approval, advised Montgomery to drop the equivalent of a second airborne division in the Arnhem area. Montgomery, Smith would later recall, "ridiculed the idea" and brushed his advice aside.

H-hour was scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on September 17, but the operation began the preceding night with the RAF Bomber Command attacking German air defenses along the routes the transports and gliders were to follow. Two hundred Lancasters and 23 Mosquitos dropped 890 tons of bombs on German airfields, and 59 other aircraft attacked German flak positions.

Early on D-day morning, 100 British bombers with fighter escort attacked German coastal defense batteries. Later in the morning, 816 B-17s of the U.S. Eighth Air Force,

As they await their jumpmaster's command, the American paratroopers forming a "stick" of men about to jump show their different feelings on the verge of combat awaiting them on the Dutch landscape far below. The men here are seen carrying gas masks, walkie-talkie radios, reserve parachutes and various other items of combat gear. The lieutenant in charge carries a Garand M-1 rifle rather than the shorter M-1 carbine often favored by the American airborne troops during World War II.

also accompanied by fighter escort, attacked 117 flak positions along the routes to be followed by the troop carriers, and six B-17s struck at an airfield at Eindhoven.

The morning of Sunday, September 17, was ideal for an airborne operation. The weather over the North Sea and Continent was fair—with only a slight haze, visibility varied from four to six miles.

Twelve British and six American transports carrying pathfinders led the way out of England at 10:45 a.m., scheduled to drop their teams on the DZs and LZs 20 minutes before H-hour. The pathfinders were followed by 1,545 transports and 478 gliders which took off from 24 airfields, passed briefly through their rendezvous points and went on to fly across the sea in two immense columns, one northern and one southern.

Protection for the transports and gliders was provided by 1,131 fighters. A British command, Air Defense of Great Britain, furnished 371 Tempests, Spitfires and Mosquitos along the northern route. There, two squadrons of Spitfires flew the entire corridor to Arnhem in a line abreast, five to eight miles wide, searching for flak in advance of the troop carriers. The Eighth Air Force covered the southern route with 548 P-38s, P-47s and P-51s. Even farther south, the Ninth U.S. Air Force sent 212 planes to suppress flak near the Belgian-Dutch border.

The Allies' well-planned routes, plentiful air support and fighter escorts kept *Luftwaffe* activity and German antiaircraft fire to a minimum, and Allied aircraft losses were low. Only 75 of the 4,676 transports, gliders, fighters, and bombers taking part in the operation were lost. "A piece of cake," said one British pilot.

Of the aircraft carrying 101st Airborne Division men, only one plane carrying pathfinders and two paratroop-carrying transports failed to get through. Sixteen transports were shot down, but only after the men they were carrying had jumped. The pilots had been briefed not to take evasive action if fired on, so their paratroopers would land on the proper DZs—the pilots won high praise for keeping on course even though it cost some of them their lives. The division historian would record that it was "the most successful landing that the division had ever had, in either training or combat."

Behind the transports that had dropped the paratroopers came planes towing Waco gliders. Of the 72 gliders, 53 landed safely on their assigned LZs.

The 101st's troopers units quickly moved on after their respective landings, intent upon gaining their objectives as quickly as possible. Southwest of Veghel, the 501st Parachute Infantry occupied the village of Eerde, blocked the road between Veghel and St. Oedenrode and seized the rail bridge across the Zuid Willems Canal outside of Veghel. Then occupying Veghel itself and seizing a bridge across the Aa River, the 501st accomplished its D-day objectives in just three hours.

South of St. Oedenrode, meanwhile, the 502nd Parachute Infantry moved into position to help the 506th Parachute Infantry take Eindhoven, if needed. The 502nd itself had established an assembly area near Son and, by nightfall, had scattered some rear-echelon Germans in a fight for St. Oedenrode. Secured as a result of the skirmish was a stretch of highway and an alternate bridge across the Dommel River.

One of the 502nd's company-sized units, strengthened by a platoon of engineers and a section of machine-gunners, headed south to capture the highway and rail bridges over the Wilhelmina Canal outside Best. The company became bogged down fighting in the Zonsche Forest east of Best and sent one of its platoons forward with the engineers and machine-gunners to take the bridges. The highway bridge would be blown up by the Germans and the Americans captured, although their captors would in turn surrender to them on D plus 2 as German resistance in the area crumbled.

Colonel Robert F. Sink's 506th Parachute Infantry had

a nearly perfect, unopposed drop northwest of Son. One battalion, accompanied by Maxwell D. Taylor, by-passed Son to the west in an attempt to capture the bridge crossing the Wilhelmina Canal at the south edge of town. It was then to continue on to Eindhoven, six miles to the south. The remaining two battalions went directly to Son and methodically cleared it of Germans.

Both the battalion which Taylor accompanied and the two battalions which cleared Son overcame 88mm guns, but the Germans blew up the bridge before the paratroopers could capture it. Undeterred, two officers and a sergeant swam to the far side of the canal followed by a squad rowing across in a small boat. The Americans overcame light resistance, and by 11:00 p.m. their engineers had built a footbridge—the regiment then crossed over to the south bank. Sink now halted until daylight, for he believed there was a large number of Germans in Eindhoven and did not want to enter the city at night.

While the 101st Airborne Division was fighting for highways and bridges north of Eindhoven, British General Horrocks' 30 Corps was struggling toward the city from the south. The GARDEN thrust by road had begun with an artillery bombardment at 2:15 p.m., and 30 Corps launched its advance 35 minutes later. The way was neither fast nor easy. Horrocks had expected to cover the 15 miles to Eindhoven in "two or three hours," but by nightfall he had gotten only to Valkenswaard, seven miles from his starting point.

Meanwhile, to the north, the American 82nd Airborne Division's drop had gone even more smoothly than that of the 101st. Flak was light and inaccurate—only one of the 482 transports carrying paratroopers failed to get through.

Behind Gavin's paratroopers came flights of 56 Waco and 32 British Horsa gliders. Five aborted, one went astray, and one was shot down, but only seven men were injured in those that landed. British General "Boy" Browning and his staff were among the men who landed in the Horsas.

The 82nd's 505th Parachute Infantry, dropped south of Groesbeek, soon rounded up German stragglers there with help from the Dutch Underground, and then occupied high ground west of the town. Later, it sent a patrol to Heumen, where it made contact with the 504th Parachute Infantry at the bridge over the Maas-Waal Canal. The 505th also occupied the high ground extending southward from Groesbeek for about three miles to the Kiekberg, a high point overlooking the village of Riethorst and the highway passing through that town from the Reichswald Forest to Nijmegen. Later in the day, a 505th company cleared Riethorst and set up a roadblock. An attempt to capture a railroad bridge over the Maas at Mook failed when the Germans blew it up.

A 505th battalion dug in on high ground at and north of Groesbeek and sent a company-sized patrol to the Reichswald. It found no enemy in the forest.

Colonel Reuben M. Tucker's 504th Parachute Infantry's primary mission, meanwhile, was to seize the nine-span, 1500-foot bridge over the Maas at Grave. Lieutenant John S. Thompson and his stick of 16 paratroopers accomplished this admirably, while ducking small-arms fire and knocking out a 20mm gun in a flak tower with two rounds from a bazooka. In less than three hours, Thompson's battalion was in complete control of the bridge.

One of Tucker's other battalions moved to seize the bridges over the Maas-Waal Canal at Malden and Heumen. The Germans blew up the bridge at Malden as the Americans were about to take it, but the bridge at Heumen was secured after dark when the airborne overran the last

As commander of the First Allied Airborne Army, Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton (right) checks the invasion map shortly before the departure of the first airborne wave on Sunday, Sept. 17, 1944. Note the wartime censor's deletion of the face of the soldier and of all identifying unit patches and insignia.

pocket of German resistance. The Heumen bridge would later serve the British as their main crossing site over the canal. The regiment's third battalion, meanwhile, cleared Germans from between the Maas and the Maas-Canal as far as the main highway.

Except for a battalion that landed a mile north of the DZ, the American 508th Parachute Infantry landed on high ground north of Groesbeek. One battalion headed west toward Hatert to block the Nijmegen-Mook highway, while another moved northward to occupy a wooded ridgeline which extended from the southeastern edge of Nijmegen to beyond Hotel Berg en Dal.

As the situation developed, the 508th's Colonel Roy E. Lindquist chose the remaining battalion, the 1st, as the unit to seize the main prize—the highway bridge across the Waal at Nijmegen. Due to time lost clearing an intermediate objective and skirmishing inside the city, however, the battalion was unable to take the bridge before German reinforcements arrived. The opportunity to take the bridge cheaply had been lost.

While the Americans were making progress taking their bridges and key terrain, except where the bridges were destroyed, the British airborne were in trouble at Arnhem. Their operation had begun almost flawlessly, with all 319 gliders and 331 planes getting through and, in almost all cases, placing their men and equipment on their assigned LZs and DZs. Their distance from the bridge and their need to hold the airhead, however, slowed the British down and weakened them once they were on the ground. The chance presence of the 9th and 10th SS Panzer Divisions a few miles east of Arnhem only made a bad situation worse. Two battalions of the British regiment responsible for taking the bridge became bogged down in fighting short of their objective—of the remaining battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. John D. Frost, only about 500 men reached the north end of the bridge. The Germans held the south end, and Frost had a fight on his hands.

LEFT: At an airfield in England, pilots of the First Allied Airborne Army receive their instructions and final weather reports just before take-off for the 1,545 transport aircraft and glider-towing planes launched Sept. 17, 1944, as the first airborne wave of Operation MARKET-GARDEN. CENTER: Dutch civilians and U.S. troops unload a glider that landed in a turnip patch in Holland at the start of Operation MARKET-GARDEN, while hundreds of American paratroopers still descend from the sky. The Dutch welcomed the Allied forces as liberators from Nazi oppression. "The air seemed to reek with hate for the Germans," noted one officer. RIGHT: A wounded troop transport plunges to earth in Holland during a drop for members of the First Allied Airborne Army in Operation MARKET-GARDEN. The parachutes are those of the crew members from the crippled transport.

Except for some heavy local fighting, the next day saw a temporary equilibrium established between the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the Germans. The airborne troops had taken most of their objectives and were thinly spread, while the Germans had not yet fully reacted.

In Nijmegen, the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, made two more attempts to take the highway bridge over the Waal. It tried once with two companies and once with one, but the Germans by now had grown too strong to be dislodged.

Elsewhere in the 82nd Airborne Division's sector, another battalion of the 505th Parachute Infantry took Mook on the Venlo-Nijmegen highway. A battalion of the 508th Parachute infantry secured Beek and blocked the Kleve-Nijmegen highway. A platoon of the 508th also attempted to take the bridge over the Maas-Waal Canal near Honinghutje in the early morning, but the Germans set off demolitions during the attack and damaged the bridge beyond use.

In the 101st Airborne Division sector, the heaviest fighting on D plus 1 took place near Best, where the 502nd Parachute Infantry's Colonel John M. Michaelis committed a second battalion. The Germans also sent reinforcements into the area, and the two American battalions were hard-pressed to defend the Zonsche Forest against a spirited counterattack. The Germans were halted with help from a flight of P-47s.

Meanwhile, progress was being made to the south. Sink's 506th Parachute Infantry was well within Eindhoven by mid-morning of D plus 1—as it cleared the city, the Dutch began to greet the Americans and celebrate. "The reception was terrific," observed one American officer. "The air seemed to reek with hate for the Germans." At about 7 p.m., the Guards Armored Division came into view from the south. The British road force kept going, headed northward through Eindhoven without stopping, and by 6:45 the next morning had installed a Bailey Bridge at Son and crossed the Wilhelmina Canal. Due to heavy fighting south of Eindhoven and the need to bridge the canal at Son, however, the roadbound GARDEN thrust by the British was 33 hours behind schedule.

D plus 1 also saw major Allied attempts at reinforcement and resupply. The morning weather had turned foul and was too foggy for flying, but in the afternoon three airborne and glider missions were able to add about 9,000 more troops to the MARKET forces.

In spite of what appeared to be continued Allied momentum on D plus 1, the Germans had begun to react, and the fighting entered a new phase. The Dutch Underground now began to report Germans massing in the Reichswald Forest, while in the north the Germans had virtually surrounded the British at the Arnhem bridge. Very few British who dropped on D plus 1 were able to reach the bridge, and General Urquhart's hopes now depended on the arrival of the Polish Parachute Brigade and 30 Corps, a double development planned to take place on D plus 2. Due to a failure of communications, Urquhart did not know how distant Horrock's 30 Corps was, and no one to the south knew how tenuous was the British hold at Arnhem.

Once past Son, 30 Corps advanced rapidly and reached Grave at 8:20 a.m. on D plus 2. Locally, heavy fighting continued on the A11-Americans' perimeter, but now the highway and railroad bridges at Nijmegen became the 82nd Airborne Division's top priority. The 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, formerly in division reserve, attempted to take both bridges with help from British armor, infantry and artillery, but the end of the day found the Germans still in possession.

Then came D plus 3, and with it, Major Cook's waterborne assault across the Waal. At 2:30 p.m., the British planes struck the north bank. Fifteen minutes later, 100 British and American guns began laying down an artillery preparation, including white phosphorous which provided a light smokescreen. Then, at 3:00 p.m., Cook's 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry, began its attack. Aided by fire support from two squadrons of British tanks and part of another battalion of the 504th, the airborne troops began to cross the Waal about a mile downriver from Nijmegen's railroad bridge.

Using the 26 plywood and canvas boats seen for the first time only 20 minutes before, they paddled the 400 yards to the far bank in the face of heavy German fire. Said "Boy" Browning, who was observing from a building on the south bank: "I have never seen a more gallant action." As he watched, 13 boats made it to the enemy side.

The survivors, though, killed more than 50 Germans near the water's edge, and then continued their attack for 800 yards across the flat, barren terrain to the diked road where more Germans waited. They overwhelmed the enemy, killing some who tried to surrender, and waited for fresh waves of boats to arrive with additional paratroopers. Eleven boats survived the return trip to the south bank of the Waal, then made six crossings during the afternoon, bringing the remainder of the 3rd Battalion and then the 1st.

Although squads and platoons became intermixed during the crossing of the Waal, the men acted with initiative and aggressiveness on the north bank and soon were in position to take both the railroad bridge and the highway bridge from the enemy side. Many Germans who were caught on the railroad bridge tried to escape by charging across it to the south bank, but were cut down by the airborne on that side. British tanks began to cross the highway bridge as the Americans were approaching the far end, and both got there at about the same time. It was 7:10 p.m. on D plus 3, September 20.

D plus 3 had been a bright day in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division. Not only had the 504th Parachute Infantry taken the Waal bridges, a feat for which Cook was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, but the 505th successfully defended Mook and the 508th repelled the Germans at Beek. The three regiments had fought and won three separate battles. It was a dramatic climax to the American part in MARKET-GARDEN. The Americans had fought well and won, even if the bridge at Arnhem would be lost, and with it the ultimate Montgomery objective. Despite Cook's costly success at Nijmegen, the British armor never was able to punch through to Arnhem.

To the south, however, the 101st Airborne Division had been fighting its own desperate battle. The Second British Army troops to the left and right of 30 Corps did not keep pace with Horrocks and, as he advanced, his flanks became more vulnerable. The Germans counterattacked repeatedly beginning on D plus 2, and continued to do so for about a week, occasionally cutting the highway before the airborne drove them off. The American Screaming Eagles came to call this stretch of road Hell's Highway.

At 9:30 a.m. on D plus 8 (September 25), Horrocks and Browning conceded failure by deciding to withdraw those British and Poles who were still on the north bank of the Rhine. Of the approximately 9,000 men who had fought there, only 2,398 returned.

American losses, while not as severe, were heavy. The 82nd Airborne Division suffered 215 killed, 790 wounded and 427 missing during the nine-day battle. The 101st Airborne Division lost 315 killed, 1,248 wounded and 547 men missing.

While apologists for Montgomery emphasize the positive aspects of MARKET-GARDEN, such as its local successes and the liberation of many thousands of Dutch, the primary objective of the operation, the Rhine bridge at Arnhem, remained beyond reach through the end. Measured by that hard standard, the combined operation was a failure.

D plus 8 did not bring the end of combat for the 82nd and the 101st Airborne Divisions. MARKET-GARDEN had driven a 65-mile salient into enemy territory. That salient would be held and expanded. Although priorities would change and the direction and pace of the Allied advance would vary, Montgomery and his continuing operations would keep the American airborne on line for two more months. To Brereton, keeping the airborne divisions on the front lines as infantry was "a violation of airborne employment." He protested to Eisenhower that "further combat will deplete them of trained men beyond replacement capacity." Eisenhower, in his role of an Allied rather than an American commander, saw the need for men to hold the newly expanded front and did not press Montgomery as hard as he might have.

Crossing the key Nijmegen bridge across the Waal on September 21 are Sherman (M-4) tanks from the British 30 Corps' Irish Guards. They are shown in triumphant parade the day after the span's capture by the American 82nd Airborne Division's 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, thanks to a difficult river crossing by flimsy boats in the teeth of strong enemy fire.

Southwest of the salient, the British had captured Antwerp intact on September 4, but its harbor had been useless because the Germans continued to hold the 60-mile Scheldt estuary, which led to the sea. After a month, during which Montgomery had conducted MARKET-GARDEN and weighed an attack on the Ruhr, the Second British Army began its drive to gain control of the estuary, a campaign culminating in the capture of Walcheren Island on November 8.

Southeast of the salient, troops of the Allied 21st Army Group and Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group advanced the Allied front toward the Westwall and the industrial Ruhr. It was a slow, difficult struggle, and the Germans east of Eindhoven were not completely driven beyond the Maas River until December 3.

The American airborne remained on line through most of this period, misused as conventional infantry into the damp chill of late fall. Montgomery did not feel confident enough to release the first of the 82nd Airborne until D plus 55, or November 11. The last of the 101st Airborne did not come off the line until 16 days later. Nonetheless, the deeds of both divisions since September 17 had been the stuff of which proud combat traditions are made. □

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Britain's Bleakest Hour

After the Fall of France, Churchill went out of his way to torpedo talk of peace with Hitler—but suppose there had been no Churchill? Suppose the *Luftwaffe* had continued its campaign against RAF facilities . . . then what?

By Theodore A. Wilson

In terms of World War II, the summer of 1940 offers endless possibilities for playing the game of "counterfactual history." What if Winston Churchill had died or been killed? The likelihood of that happening was certainly large. He was, after all, 65 years old and had suffered several serious illnesses. There was the ever-present possibility of assassination. Or simple misadventure (the collapse of a building during one of his inspections of bombed-out London) might have done him in.

What if the *Luftwaffe* had maintained its pressure on British fighter airfields and aircraft factories (instead of bombing London and other civilian centers)? Arguably the RAF would have been driven north of London, giving the Germans domination over the English Channel and the invasion beaches of Britain's south coast. What if the Churchill government had concluded that the United States was a weak reed incapable of bold action and had accepted peace terms from Hitler?

At the very least, if Britain had been knocked out or had sought a negotiated settlement with Germany in the summer of 1940, the course of World War II would have been dramatically different. The participation of the United States might not have taken place at all. Possibly Franklin Delano Roosevelt would not have run for a fourth term—an outspoken isolationist could have been elected President. That scenario might feature a German victory over an isolated Soviet Union, and an unopposed Japanese advance across Southeast Asia. A Third Reich

In the painting by Charles Cundall, the battle-weary men of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) embark on the hodge-podge fleet sent to their rescue at Dunkirk, while three RAF fighters thwart Luftwaffe attempts to destroy the British and French troops still on the beach on the east tip of the European Continent that was invaded by Hitler's Fritz the British in late May of 1940. The 'little ships' of England were sent to rescue the force stranded at Dunkirk.

The Battle of Britain that soon followed Dunkirk and the fall of France in mid-1940 was fought in the skies by the RAF and the Luftwaffe, *true. Essential to RAF success, however, was the plotting done in control rooms like this one at No. 11 Fighter Group's headquarters at Uxbridge, near London. One of four fighter groups defending Britain from* Luftwaffe *raids in the summer of 1940, No. 11 boasted the largest concentration of fighter bases since it covered the key southeastern area of the country—closest to German airbases on the newly occupied French coast just across the English Channel. Painting by Charles Cundall.*

triumphant over all of Eurasia, the remnants of the British and French fleets at German disposal, would have posed a "clear and present danger" to the United States. Even had America belatedly entered the war to lead a coalition of Commonwealth nations, the Soviet Union and assorted European governments-in-exile, the strategic options offering prospect of ultimate victory would have been drastically reduced.

The fact is, the summer of 1940 was Britain's—and Winston Churchill's—finest hour. Standing alone after the swift military and psychological collapse of France in a mere five weeks following the German onslaught that began on May 10, 1940, the British faced the prospect of imminent invasion, bombardment of their cities and vital industrial centers by a *Luftwaffe* possessing great superiority in numbers and battle experience, and the choking off of essential sea lanes by the self-same *Luftwaffe*, German U-boats, and surface raiders.

To counter these various manifestations of the German juggernaut, Britain could muster its traditional savior, the Royal Navy, and the expanding but still hopelessly outnumbered Royal Air Force. The British Army, never intended to undertake independent military operations against a foe such as the German *Wehrmacht* and lacking both doctrine and technology to challenge the *blitzkrieg*, was in near total disarray after Dunkirk. The British, while saving 224,585 of their troops at Dunkirk, had abandoned most of their weapons, transport and equipment. Only the undermanned RAF and the sturdy shield of the Royal Navy stood between Britain and certain disaster.

For the short term, Britain would survive if her naval and air forces blunted German efforts to strangle inbound commerce and smash vital factories. Hitler then might turn his attention elsewhere. While a British staff assessment of strategic options following France's surrender acknowledged that "the crux of the matter is air superiority," it concluded that "the real test is whether the morale of our fighting personnel and civil population will counterbalance the numerical and material advantages Germany enjoys." Faith in the ability of the British people to endure and overcome adversity—what Edward R. Murrow described as "a blind belief that Britain will survive"—was the central fact in the miracle of summer, 1940.

But Winston Churchill wanted more than survival. He wanted a strategy that would lead to ultimate victory, for he realized that without the prospect of a final victory over the Axis the rich vein of British self-confidence would erode—and with it any chance of longterm survival.

The hard facts were that Britain alone could not defeat Nazi Germany. The resources did not exist. First and foremost, British manpower was inadequate. As Churchill biographer Raymond A. Callahan has written: "From a population of 48 million, Britain had to maintain the world's largest navy and merchant marine, a powerful air force, and its industrial life, all equally vital to survival." The projected goal for the Army, therefore, was a maximum of 55 divisions, of which 23 were to be contributed by the Empire. The *Wehrmacht*, by sharp contrast, fielded 126 divisions in May 1940 and would dispose of 296 in January 1944.

A less obvious but even more serious limitation was Britain's inability to pay for the weapons, raw materials

and other goods she needed to fight and win a long war with Nazi Germany. A tremendous proportion of essential munitions had to be ordered from abroad, principally from the United States. Between April and July 1940, for example, commitments by the British government for iron and steel purchases in the United States rose from £12.6 million to £100 million. The Churchill government's switch to a total war program opened the floodgates for all sorts of orders for munitions and raw materials. Unfortunately, existing U.S. laws dictated that those purchases had to be paid for—cash on the barrelhead.

The simple fact was that there were not enough dollars available to the British to finance this level of buying for more than a few months. Britain's economic power had declined dramatically from its zenith in the 19th century, a process compounded by the costs inflicted by World War I. Thus, in 1940 Britain faced the need to sell off what remained of the global holdings offsetting her industrial backwardness (thus ensuring a future status as a third-rate power), or make arrangements to obtain financial help from some third party.

Winston Churchill made two fateful decisions—critics at the time and later would say "desperate gambles"—when these facts were made known to him. The destruction of German power, he concluded, was only possible if the United States entered the war. Thus, he committed himself totally and irrevocably to the task of bringing about early and full-scale American involvement on Britain's behalf. The rhetorical flourish of Churchill's "fight on the beaches" speech, promising to maintain the struggle "until, in God's good time, the New World with all its power and might sets forth to the rescue and liberation of the Old," reflected what became for him a basic credo. Of course, for the United States to take such a momentous step, Churchill realized, would require tremendous changes in the American public's posture toward the war and supreme political courage on the part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Churchill's second critical decision was to risk everything—exhausting the nation's financial reserves and mortgaging the very existence of the British Empire—to prove to the Americans that Britain was determined to fight on and deserved to be saved. Rather than continue the policy of conserving Britain's scarce financial and material resources by waging a war of attrition, Britain embraced, within days of Churchill being named Prime Minister, a total-war strategy. The authorization on May 15 of bombing operations against Germany was one manifestation of his all-or-nothing policy. Creation of a "Special Operations Executive" charged with setting Europe ablaze through sponsorship of sabotage and subversion was another.

Most important, perhaps, was the approval of war orders in North America amounting to more than $3.2 billion while acknowledging that sufficient gold and dollar reserves existed to cover only a small part of the bill. Over the summer of 1940, Britain's limited capabilities to take the offensive would be exploited to the utmost.

During the 18 months between Dunkirk and Pearl Harbor—but especially during the titanic struggles of summer, 1940—Churchill's government consciously and deliberately mortgaged Britain's future as a world power. It depleted hard-earned reserves of foreign exchange, postponed payments to Commonwealth suppliers of vital raw materials until some unknown future date, abandoned long-established markets for British exports, and sold off large chunks of overseas investments.

Most important, because of the propaganda impact, was

TOP: Arriving in New York harbor on January 11, 1941, after a 22-day voyage from South Africa is the American heavy cruiser Louisville, *her hold containing $148 million in gold that was to pay for British purchases of war materials in the United States. MIDDLE: Piling up by the bale in the U.S. Senate's mailroom during the summer of 1940 are pro-neutrality letters from American citizens. Arriving at the rate of 200,000 a day, the letters reflected the variety of isolationist groups and sentiment still rampant in the land, despite Britain's clear and present danger from Nazi Germany. ABOVE: Two London housewives appear skeptical as they regard a prefabricated air-raid shelter designed to protect a family of six. After the Luftwaffe, at Hitler's order, began bombing London and other cities in early September 1940, the British looked to hasty improvisations like this to protect civilians from the German bombs.*

the skyrocketing growth of British war orders in the United States. Not only did the British Purchasing Mission assume all of the outstanding orders earlier placed by the French ($600 million), but new commitments were rushed through to replace some of the losses suffered by the British in Europe before Dunkirk. The shipment of 500,000 rifles and 500 75mm field guns, along with all available supplies of copper, explosives, steel and aircraft engines was quickly arranged.

Churchill's overriding goal was for President Roosevelt to ask Congress to declare war. Churchill's most urgent need, however, was for assurances that the Roosevelt Administration, convinced that Britain would survive, was prepared to invest—both financially and psychologically—to maintain Britain's ability to fight on. He wrote President Roosevelt on May 15 that Britain was determined to continue the fight, but also warned: "The voice and force of the United States may count for nothing if they are withheld for long. You may have a completely subjugated, Nazified Europe established with astounding swiftness and the weight may be more than we can bear."

Churchill urged the President to give immediate help, "everything short of actually engaging armed forces." Desperately needed were mothballed World War I destroyers, airplanes, antiaircraft gun and small arms ammunition. Still more urgent was some assurance that the Roosevelt Administration would underwrite British purchases if that became necessary. "We shall go on paying dollars for as long as we can, but I should like to feel reasonably sure that when we can pay no more you will give us the stuff all the same," Churchill suggested to FDR.

It may be true that Prime Minister Churchill decided to place Britain's future in the hands of the American President because he believed he and FDR had established a unique personal relationship. Churchill and Roosevelt had corresponded since September 1939. Elevation to the post of Prime Minister raised the significance of these exchanges to a new level, and Churchill tended to wax eloquent about the "special relationship" between Britain and the United States and about the intimacy that had grown betwen him and FDR. The Churchill-Roosevelt relationship was never as close as Churchill claimed, however, and President Roosevelt was not the thoroughgoing Anglophile Churchill apparently preferred to believe. While the "special relationship" flowed from calculation and self-interest on both sides, Churchill preferred to think otherwise. Perhaps the element of wishful thinking to be found in his characterization of FDR's views and of their presumed closeness reflects the knowledge that he had no other options. By committing Britain's fate to the whims of American politics and currents of public opinion, he was forced to rely on the courage and wisdom of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Through June and July, the response of the Roosevelt Administration to Churchill's ardent wooing was hardly encouraging. Churchill himself later admitted that for a time after the Fall of France, "the Americans treated us in that rather distant and sympathetic manner one adopts toward a friend one knows is suffering from cancer."

In the wake of the German invasion of France, the President had turned on the spigot of spending for defense. He went before Congress on May 16 with the first of several emergency appropriations requests, proposing such gigantic projects as the production of 50,000 combat aircraft per year. But nothing was requested for the British, then bravely resisting the nation against which those warplanes were to be used. Indeed, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall opposed the release of any weapons to Britain. He doubted whether they would be of any use (most American military observers tended to write off Britain during the period of Dunkirk), and he was all too aware of the desperate shortages faced by the U.S. Army of almost all the same items of munitions as those requested by the British.

Prime Minister Churchill would observe bitterly in a War Cabinet meeting on May 27 that the United States "had given us practically no help in the war, and now that we have broken the will of the enemy to bring all Europe under his domination."

That dogmatic position was immortalized in his House of Commons speech on June 4, 1940, promising: "We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight on the beaches, in the fields, in the streets, in the hills; we shall never surrender."

Nevertheless, behind the scenes, serious consideration was given to a negotiated settlement between Great Britain and Nazi Germany. The attitudes that had produced the policy of appeasement under the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain were still present in the precarious Conservative Party coalition Churchill led. Senior ministers, such as Lord Halifax (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), were open to consideration of peace terms giving Hitler a free hand in Europe in return for guarantees of Britain's independence and continued leadership of the British Empire. "Common sense and not bravado would dictate the British Government's policy," Lord Halifax optimistically observed to the Swedish ambassador in mid-June.

Halifax and others deeply feared the consequences of waging total war. If defeat came, the British people would have suffered the horrors of air warfare, have risked starvation, and might face a prolonged occupation by Hitler's gray-clad legions. Even if victory ensued, it would arrive only after a lengthy period of privation during which Britain's economic

A PEACE SETTLEMENT?

So far as the world knew, Winston Churchill steadfastly refused to acknowledge the possibility of surrender even in the dark hours of Dunkirk. Bulldog determination and pugnacity always had been his most pronounced character traits, and now the circumstances which Britain confronted were perfectly suited to this tough old warrior.

Churchill knew instinctively that any suggestion that Britain was willing to entertain peace terms might shatter the popular mood of insular pride, anger and will to resist at all costs, which was the government's strongest card. And, too, any sign of wavering could justify a decision by the Americans to write off Great Britain as a lost cause.

So, throughout the anguished summer, 1940, Churchill took every occasion to proclaim that Britain "would do and suffer anything," rather than surrender. To stiffen the resolve of his government leaders, Churchill circulated on May 29 a blunt statement of his position: "In these dark days the Prime Minister would be grateful if all his colleagues in the Government, as well as high officials, would maintain a high morale in their circles; not minimising the gravity of events, but showing confidence in our ability and inflexible resolve to continue the war till

they saw how great was the danger their attitude was that they wanted to keep everything which would help us for their own defence." Ironically, the process of awakening American opinion also jeopardized British access to U.S. military production.

The situation with regard to financial aid was, if anything, even more grim. The Foreign Office's resident American expert, echoing Churchill's statement of faith, wrote on May 17: "If we survive the present crisis (as I am confident we will), I have no doubt that America will let us have everything we want and that when our dollars and gold run out there will be no difficulty about credits or gifts." Still, the policies of the Roosevelt Administration, especially the Treasury (headed by FDR's political intimate Henry Morgenthau, Jr.), did not inspire confidence in American generosity. There was, first of all, little eagerness to modify two laws—the Johnson Debt-Default Act and the Neutrality Act of 1939—which effectively blocked the extension of loans to Britain by either the U.S. government or private citizens.

While smarting at Britain's failure to pay off all her World War I debts, American officials also had great difficulty in overcoming youthful geography lessons in which they had learned about the enormous wealth and power of

Three Messerschmitt BF-109E fighters accompanying a Junkers 88 bomber on a raid against England in the summer of 1940. German strategists, vexed by the difficulties in launching the invasion of England (Operation SEA LION), hoped that the Luftwaffe *would solve their problems by hammering the island into submission.*

Capturing the mood, the June 18, 1940, cartoon by David Low reflects Britain's determination to survive—even to prevail—despite the setbacks of 1940.

resources would be sold off at bargain prices and world leadership turned over to the Americans.

The question of what the Germans might offer as peace terms was debated openly in several War Cabinet meetings during May 26-28, 1940. Halifax brought up the idea of using Italy to find out what terms Hitler might be willing to offer. Churchill's immediate reaction was that this was futile, for Germany's conditions for a negotiated peace would leave Britain defenseless.

Notably, however, he did not oppose an overture to Mussolini if assurances about the maintenance of Britain's independence were given.

The issue arose again in the War Cabinet on May 27. His emotions spilling forth, the Prime Minister proclaimed: "If the worst came to the worst, it would not be a bad thing for this country to go down fighting for the other countries which had been overcome by the Nazi tyranny."

Lord Halifax, who thought, he noted later, that "Winston talked the most frightful rot," reminded the bellicose Prime Minister that the previous day he had said he would be prepared to discuss peace terms if "matters vital to the independence of this country were unaffected." Other ministers supported a policy of taking seriously any German offer of peace terms.

Backed into a corner, Churchill gruffly stated that he would not join France in seeking an armistice. But if he were offered tolerable terms, he might consider them, was the impression he left. The Prime Minister could not afford a public row or, worse, the resignations of still influential political figures such as Chamberlain and Halifax. But neither was he prepared to show anything less than total determination to hang on until America came to the rescue.

The solution was to ensure that the Germans not float peace terms which might prove too tempting for the British government to ignore. Churchill could not control what went on in Hitler's inner circle in Berlin, but he could influence Nazi policies by scornfully rejecting in advance the "foolish notion" that Britain *would* consider an offer of peace. That he proceeded to do over the next few days—in the War Cabinet, in meetings with other government ministers, and in the House of Commons. "He was quite magnificent," recorded one official who heard him reject "parley or surrender" and vow to fight on. The overwhelmingly positive reaction confirmed Churchill in his views and persuaded waverers such as Chamberlain.

TOP: A British air raid warden equipped with binoculars, gas mask and steel helmet scans the skies over London for any signs of approaching German aircraft. Looming in the background is the dome of London's St. Paul's Cathedral—both the cathedral and Buckingham Palace were damaged in bombing raids conducted on September 11, 1940. ABOVE: As one of America's first steps breaking its recent isolationist mood, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Selective Training and Service Act on September 16, 1940. Looking on are Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson (left) and Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall (second from right). The bill established the first peacetime conscription in U.S. history and obligated all men 21 to 35 to register for the draft.

the British Empire. The "image of British opulence" was shared by many Americans, including President Roosevelt. Thus, the U.S. Treasury pressed for disclosure by the British of all investments in the United States (estimated at some $675 million). The next step was forced sale of those investments (if necessary, at bargain-basement prices) to assist with the campaign to win public support for American financial aid. Secretary Morgenthau later wrote: "The sale of even one business or the presence in New York of an agent known to be willing to sell would help them enormously with Congress."

Morgenthau also expressed great interest in the British gold reserves collected in South Africa (some 25 million ounces) and proposed that British-controlled gold be brought to the United States for "safekeeping." Eventually, in December 1940, President Roosevelt proposed to send the U.S. cruiser *Louisville* to South Africa to collect $150 million in gold to pay for British military purchases. Churchill, though enraged by behavior he likened to that of "a sheriff collecting the last assets of a helpless debtor," gave in. The Prime Minister by now had learned that in America, politics was the order of the day, and anti-British feelings remained powerful.

Any remaining doubts about the Roosevelt Administration's hardnosed, self-serving approach to Britain's plight should have been answered by the exchanges between Churchill and Roosevelt over the future of the British fleet. A lifelong advocate of sea power, FDR asked (at first politely and then with growing bluntness) for assurances that, should Britain fall, her fleet would be sent to Canada or the United States. Churchill was torn. He was tempted to use the President's manifest concern about the British fleet as an instrument of blackmail to obtain promises of aid, but he also was worried that discussion of such "hypothetical questions" might lead Roosevelt to doubt Britain's staying power. Further, he noted: "We must be careful not to let Americans view too complacently pros-

pects of a British collapse out of which they would get the British fleet and the guardianship of the British Empire."

Churchill persisted in this realistic stance regarding the fleet, and not until the Destroyer-Bases Deal did he give any sort of absolute commitment that the British fleet would not be a bargaining counter in peace negotiations.

Evidence mounted through June and into July that America, though deeply admiring Britain's noble resistance to overwhelming German military force, was not prepared to support all-out aid to Britain. A State Department official summed up the apparently prevailing point of view: "It seems plain that our job is to collect the strongest and solidest defense forces we can. . . . The outcome of the battle which will decide the fate of Europe obviously will be decided before anything can get across the Atlantic."

Roosevelt himself seemed either frozen in place or prepared to wait cynically upon the outcome of the Battle of Britain. Given his style of leadership, his tendency to rely on personal relationships while keeping control of policy decisions in his own hands, this meant that his government effectively was treading water. Although advocates of aid to Britain and U.S. intervention, such as Secretary of War Henry Stimson, besieged the President with pleas for action, he held off.

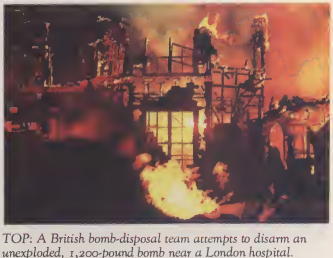
The presidential justification for inaction was the state of public opinion. At one point, FDR told Helen Reid, owner of the New York *Herald Tribune* (after she pressed him to support a draft law): "You say you have been a pacifist all your life, but you are now for universal service. From what extremes do pendulums swing for us as individuals. Governments, such as ours, cannot swing so far or so quickly. They can only move in keeping with the thought and will of the great majority of our people."

Equally important, though, was FDR's uncertainty about what course of action to pursue.

The reluctance which had afflicted Franklin D. Roosevelt and the nation lifted on August 2, 1940. In a meeting of presidential advisers which one termed "the most important cabinet meeting . . . since the President came into power," FDR gave approval to a plan to exchange 50 U.S. destroyers in exchange for British Atlantic and Caribbean bases and also made clear that he was prepared—openly—to support a compulsory military service bill. Both measures ultimately were vital to the search for ultimate victory being pursued by Winston Churchill, but it was the "Destroyer-Bases Deal" that would provide the immediate boost to British morale he so desperately needed.

The negotiations that produced the swap of 50 overaged U.S. destroyers in return for 99-year leases to bases in British possessions throughout the Western Hemisphere embodied the full range of problems the two nations encountered in the course of forging "an effective and enduring collaboration" in the summer of 1940. At first, FDR had ignored Churchill's pleas for destroyers to replace those lost at Dunkirk and in naval operations in the English Channel. When, finally, FDR began to consider the request, his chief worry was the public reaction. That led to a demand for assurances that any vessels transferred to Britain (along with the remainder of the Royal Navy) would be dispatched to the United States in the event of England's capitulation. Further, to pacify Congress and popular opinion, Roosevelt insisted that the U.S. receive compensation for the destroyers in the form of the longterm base leases.

The British—and Churchill in particular—were dismayed by this latest evidence of the American determination to drive hard bargains. Nevertheless, Churchill had cause



TOP: A British bomb-disposal team attempts to disarm an unexploded, 1,200-pound bomb near a London hospital. Always a hazardous undertaking, such work in 1940 was made even more so by the hasty training given newcomers to bomb-disposal squads—and by the booby-traps built in by the enemy to prevent removal of the fuses in explosives such as parachute mines. ABOVE: Flames devour a "blitzed" London building at the height of the Battle of Britain. German night attacks on London began in earnest on September 7, 1940—over the next two months, 150 to 200 Luftwaffe bombers dropped 100 tons of explosives on London almost every night, to say nothing of a million incendiary bombs.

to rejoice. President Roosevelt had taken a decisive step to aid Britain. Churchill now could point to a bold, public initiative by the Americans, one which set them on the path toward full-scale participation in the war. The effects of this largely symbolic gesture upon the British people, now experiencing the daily sacrifices dictated by total war and girding for the *Luftwaffe*'s onslaught, were incalculable. Churchill's great gamble had been rewarded, although actual American entry into the war would be delayed by more than a year. □

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Carrier Strike Through Mountain Passage

In the U.S. Navy's first coordinated air strike of World War II, 104 planes from two aircraft carriers attacked a Japanese invasion force off Lae and Salamaua, New Guinea. The Navy fliers hoped to hand the enemy its first significant reversal of the Pacific War.

By Robert J. Cressman

Fueled by the high-octane elixir of victory, the Japanese war machine in early 1942 ruthlessly brushed aside almost every obstacle placed in its path. Outside of a few minor setbacks—none of which caused any significant delays in their timetable of conquest—the Japanese by the first week of March had subjected the Allies to an almost ceaseless litany of defeat. Few bright rays penetrated the Allied gloom. In the Far East and Southwest Pacific, the enemy pressed on inexorably, consolidated his gains and drove all before him.

The stunning Japanese success reduced American planners to the defensive. Their long-cherished war plan, involving a steady advance across the Pacific via the Marshall Islands to relieve the Philippines, had to wait for a more propitious time. In the mind of the American public, Japanese naval air power had broken the backbone of the fleet and thrust it into the mud of Pearl Harbor. What, then, remained to strike back at the enemy when the mood of the nation—the battered Navy, too—demanded it?

What remained was the same weapon wielded with such success by the Japanese—the aircraft carrier. Task forces composed of cruisers and destoyers, each formed around one carrier, constituted the ideal weapon with which the Pacific Fleet could inflict damage on the enemy's advanced bases, divert his attention by drawing off forces that could be employed elsewhere, and boost the morale of the Navy and the nation.

On the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the Pacific Fleet possessed three carriers: *Enterprise* (CV-6), then en route back to Pearl from Wake Island; *Lexington* (CV-2), en route to Midway with Marine dive-bombers embarked, and *Saratoga* (CV-3), at San Diego, preparing

to return to Hawaiian waters. After Pearl Harbor, *Yorktown* (CV-5) was hastily summoned to the Pacific from the Atlantic, where she had been since the previous spring. The Japanese soon negated this temporary gain when a submarine torpedoed the *Saratoga* and put her out of action for nearly six months.

The *Enterprise* and the *Yorktown* carried the load at the outset. Planes from the two independently operating carriers hit ships and installations in the Marshalls and Gilberts in early February; planes from the *Enterprise* raided installations at Wake Island later the same month, and would

A Grumman F4F Wildcat fighter prepares to take off from a U.S. carrier—the Wildcat at the time of the Lae-Salamaua raid (March 1942) boasted four .50-caliber machine guns, was armor-plated and had self-sealing gas tanks, but in range and speed was inferior to the Japanese Zero.

strike those on Marcus Island early in March. Such morale-boosting blows proved a restorative to the man-in-the-street. *Time* magazine helpfully called them "hell for leather, slam-bang affairs planned with the stealthy calculation of Indian raids and executed with the bludgeon force of gang assassinations."

One desired raid, however, had not been carried out. On February 20, 1942, Task Force (TF) 11, under Vice Admiral Wilson E. Brown, neared the Japanese base at Rabaul, on the island of New Britain. Reconnaissance planes spotted it, however, and land-based bombers soon arrived to launch a vigorous attack. The aggressive combat air patrol (CAP) from the *Lexington*, together with heavy antiaircraft fire from her screening ships, tore apart the attackers, but the element of surprise was lost. Brown had to retire empty-handed. Soon thereafter, a brisk exchange of dispatches among Commander, ANZAC (Australia-New Zealand) Force (COMANZAC); Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), and Brown pointed to the urgent need for an attack on Rabaul, this time supported by a second carrier.

Brown soon got his wish. On February 24, CINCPAC

TOP: Laboring hard at a construction project on a South Pacific island early in the war are Japanese engineer troops. At newly captured Lae in March of 1942, the Japanese invaders lost no time in repairing the Lae airstrip for the expected arrival of the 24th Air Flotilla from Rabaul, as essential air cover for the newly-landed Japanese forces on New Guinea and their supporting naval vessels offshore. Original painting by Toshi Shimizu. ABOVE: American Navy Lieutenant Edward H. ("Butch") O'Hare strafes a Japanese battery of four 8cm antiaircraft guns at Salamaua while flying as a member of the Lexington's *Squadron VF-3 in the Lae-Salamaua raid. It was O'Hare, first U.S. Navy ace of the war, for whom Chicago's O'Hare International Airport would be named. His squadron at the moment depicted in the painting by Robert J. Cressman was providing protective cover while the "Lady Lex's" torpedo planes attacked Japanese ships at Salamaua, New Guinea.*

directed TF-17, formed around the *Yorktown* after leaving Pearl Harbor eight days earlier, to join the *Lexington* and TF-11. On March 2, the Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet (COMINCH), Admiral Ernest J. King, directed Commander, TF-11, to "use his combined forces to make an attack in the New Britain-Solomons Area" about March 10. The attack would provide cover for a transport convoy expected to arrive at Noumea, New Caledonia, about that time.

On the morning of March 6, the *Yorktown*, screened by two heavy cruisers and six destroyers and accompanied by an oiler, joined the *Lexington* and her consorts (six heavy cruisers and eight destroyers) southwest of the New Hebrides. Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, Commander, TF-17, along with his chief of staff and operations officer, the *Yorktown's* captain and air officer, traveled over to Brown's flagship by motor launch to meet with Brown, his staff, and other *Lexington* officers in a council of war. The fact that the *Yorktown's* pilots lacked qualifications to carry out night attacks ruled out the first option, a moonlight raid, and forced adoption of a dawn air-strike followed by cruiser and destroyer gunfire. That day, Brown issued his operations order. On the 7th, Rear Adm. John G. Crace, Royal Navy, commanding the ANZAC squadron, conferred with Brown on board the *Lexington*, and OpOrder 5-42 was distributed to the forces.

Unbeknownst to Brown, however, on March 5 a Japanese invasion convoy had already left Rabaul, bound for Lae and Salamaua, two settlements on the northeastern coast of New Guinea, preliminary to the planned seizure of Tulagi, in the Solomons, and Port Moresby. The Japanese ships proceeded undetected until the afternoon of March 7, when a Lockheed Hudson of No. 32 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, on the homeward leg of a reconnaissance flight, sighted the enemy—five or six transports, escorted by cruisers and destroyers—56 miles northeast of Buna and headed toward Lae.

At 0100 hours on the 8th, Japanese soldiers of the South Seas Force landed at Salamaua. Within six hours, they had overcome resistance offered by the "small but stout-hearted" detachment of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and Royal Australian Air Force and occupied the airfield. Meanwhile, Japanese sailors of the Special Naval Landing Force came ashore a Lae, brushing aside slight resistance, capturing not only the airfield there but the telegraph station and the town itself. An Australian Hudson bomber raided the ships off Salamaua later that day, but only managed to inflict very slight damage on the transport *Yokohama Maru.* Antiaircraft fire and seaplanes from the seaplane carrier *Kiyokawa Maru* drove off the Hudson before it could cause any more trouble.

By the following afternoon, the 9th, the industrious invaders had largely repaired demolition damage carried out by the retreating Australians, fixing up the radio station and airstrip at Lae. Within a few days, planes from the 24th Air Flotilla at Rabaul could begin moving in. For the Japanese, everything was going according to plan; the token resistance at both settlements could not have convinced them otherwise, even though the Japanese convoy commanders did worry about their lack of air cover.

The landings at Lae and Salamaua surprised the American force now bearing down on the empty nest of Rabaul, but also presented a challenge. The Japanese movement against the two settlements offered a golden opportunity for a strike; one of Brown's staff considered it "an answer to a prayer," since now the Japanese could be hit before they had an opportunity to consolidate their gains. Accomplishing the desired objective, though, was easier

said than done. Proceeding up the north coast of New Guinea, the most direct route, would expose the task force to the enemy's seemingly ever-vigilant search planes and to a possible repeat of the February 20 attack by land-based bombers. Having experienced the malevolent attentions of the Japanese in that instance, Brown and the *Lexington*'s Captain, Frederick C. Sherman, understandably sought an alternative. While it presented certain dangers, a launch from the southern side of New Guinea, from the Gulf of Papua, seemed the best way to deal Japanese Operation SR an unexpected blow.

The Navy's failure to gather hydrographic intelligence on New Guinea in time of peace, however, haunted the planning of Brown and his staff at the eleventh hour. Few white men other than gold prospectors or missionaries had ever been near the interior of this primitive island of towering mountains, rain forests and swamps. Stone-age tribes inhabited the nearly impenetrable jungles. None of the charts available on either carrier revealed anything more than the shoreline itself; the waters in which the ships would operate possessed numerous coral dangers suggested by old and somewhat doubtful charts. Furthermore, the Owen Stanley mountain range, as Australian pilots flying to and from the gold fields could attest, was wild, unexplored territory, with its highest peak, Mount Victoria, towering 13,200 feet above sea level; clouds wreathed the lofty peaks more often than not.

To obtain information on local weather conditions, as well as to determine what operations the Royal Australian Air Force and the ANZAC force could mount, Brown dispatched his aviation officer, Commander Walton W. Smith, to Townsville, Northern Australia, and Commander William B. Ault, *Lexington*'s air group commander, to Port Moresby on the morning of March 9. Ault and his wingman flew to the "Port" between Japanese air raids (one occurred shortly before they arrived, one just after), but the trip yielded fruit. Upon his return to the *Lexington* late that afternoon, Ault recounted what Australian pilots flying to the prewar gold fields had told him. A 7,500-foot altitude pass existed between Mounts Chapman and Lawson, but could only be used for four hours (7 to 11 a.m.) daily, before or after which clouds would render passage impossible. With this information in hand, Brown ordered the raid to take place the following morning. All fuel and ordnance loads had been carefully calculated, but much hinged on the weather.

The most formidable carrier task force yet fielded by the U.S. Navy went to general quarters before dawn on the 10th, as it stood purposefully toward the Gulf of Papua. On board the *Yorktown*, the alarm sounded at 0545, and the sight of her crew moving to their battle stations prompted 28-year-old William Hipple, an Associated Press/Honolulu *Star-Bulletin* war correspondent on board, to write, "You would have seen a stirring and unforgettable sample of the spirit of our Navy at war." Resounding phrases came alive before his gaze as he sensed a "spirit of determination . . . everywhere" on board the *Yorktown*. To the newsman, "an air of excitement" pervaded the ship.

Hipple watched in fascination as the flight deck of the *Yorktown* spotted the planes for launch and prepared them for the mission. Chalked on some of the bombs were slogans such as "Get a Load of This," or "A Present from F.D.R." On some of the planes had been chalked wives' or girlfriends' names, or expressions like "Heads Up Below," "Another Cloud for the Rising Sun," or "Don't Laugh—This is Over Your Head."

At 0749, shortly after the task force entered the Gulf of Papua proper, the *Lexington* turned into the wind and

TOP: Japanese Rear Admiral Kajioka Sadamichi commanded Operation SR, his country's first invasion of New Guinea. His flotilla consisted of 16 ships. ABOVE: The Japanese light cruiser Yubari, *Japanese convoy commander Sadamichi's flagship that was caught in the U.S. carrier raid off New Guinea on March 10, 1942.*

began launching her air group; at 0803, *Yorktown* commenced to do likewise. "Lady Lex" completed the evolution by 0822, having put 52 planes—including the Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless flown by Commander Ault—into the air in a little over half an hour. By 0849, all of *Yorktown*'s planes were on their way, too.

All told, there were now 104 planes droning toward the unsuspecting Japanese. From *Lexington*: 18 Douglas SBD-2 and -3 Dauntlesses of Scouting Squadron (VS) Two under Lt. Cmdr. Robert E. Dixon; 12 SBD-2 and -3 Dauntlesses of Bombing Squadron (VB) Two under Lt. Cmdr. Weldon L. Hamilton; 13 Douglas TBD-1 Devastators of Torpedo Squadron (VT) Two under Lt. Cmdr. James H. Brett, Jr., and, as escort, eight Grumman F4F-3 Wildcats of Fighting Squadron (VF) Three under Lt. Cmdr. John S. ("Jimmy") Thach. Commander Ault paced the rest, having been entrusted by Brown with the responsibility of initiating or aborting the strike.

Yorktown's equally formidable complement of 52 planes followed: 17 SBD-2 and -3s of VB-5 under Lt. Cmdr. Robert G. Armstrong; 13 SBD-3s of VS-5 under Lt. Cmdr. William O. Burch, Jr.; 12 TBD-1s of VT-5 under Lt. Cmdr. Joe Taylor, and ten F4F-3s of VF-42 under Lt. Cmdr. Oscar Pederson. To provide cover for the task force, each carrier put six fighters aloft for a CAP (combat air patrol), while *Lexington* contributed five Dauntlesses and *Yorktown* four for an anti-torpedo plane patrol.

On Bill Ault's shoulders rested a heavy burden. Behind him were 103 planes. If he found the weather bad in the key pass, he would have to abort the mission—to go farther would court disaster. As his gaze took in the majestic Owen Stanleys—a majesty that held a certain menace—he could see that conditions were right. Accordingly, he orbited the key pass halfway across the peninsula, to direct

and coordinate the passage of both groups. He began broadcasting weather and other operational information to the planes and the task group in the Gulf of Papua. Scouting Two was first across.

What did the pilots think as they passed over the mountains? Weldon Hamilton, at the head of Bombing Two, speculated about cannibals, and later recalled thinking "how petty the tribal wars in that New Guinea jungle were compared to the one in which we were engaged." No such idle contemplation, however, stirred Jimmy Brett's mind. He faced some anxious moments as *Lexington*'s torpedo planes began to experience an alarming loss of altitude—the Devastators were lumbering along with the one-ton Mark XIII torpedoes slung beneath them. As suddenly as this serious predicament drew his pilots' eyes to their altimeters, Brett spotted a verdant clearing ahead in the sunshine. He alertly recalled his long-past glider training: such conditions indicated thermal updrafts. Once the Devastators struggled over the area, the welcome updrafts gently lifted Torpedo Two over the craggy peaks. At this, a relieved Brett radioed Thach: "Halfway house."

Lieutenant Commander Dixon's Scouting Two arrived at the objective first, and began putting teeth into the expression "Remember Pearl Harbor" at 0922, when his pilots pushed over above Lae and spotted the transports *Tenyo Maru* and *Kokai Maru* and the armed merchant cruiser *Kongo Maru* lying offshore. Dixon's SBDs began working over the three Japanese ships with 500-pound bombs. Seeing the attack develop, sailors ashore dashed for a Japanese battery of four 8-centimeter high-angle antiaircraft guns, opening fire as the Dauntlesses pulled out of their dives.

At about 0925, one Dauntless, piloted by 26-year-old Ensign Joseph P. Johnson, USNR, with 20-year-old Aviation Radioman 3rd Class James B. Jewell, USN, as radioman-gunner, took a direct hit from an 8-centimeter shell at 200 feet, just as Johnson executed his pull-out. Ensign Arthur J. Schultz, Jr., USNR, flying the next plane, watched in horror as Johnson's plane partially disintegrated before his gaze and tumbled in flaming pieces toward the sea, some four to six miles off Lae. No one saw any parachutes. Seeing the reception being accorded the Dauntlesses, the four escorting F4F-3s dove and strafed the battery, putting it out of action.

Six minutes after Scouting Two had provided the curtain-raiser for the first act of the drama, Torpedo Two and Bombing Two arrived on the scene. From his Dauntless, Weldon Hamilton scanned intently the waters below with his binoculars from 15,000 feet, looking for worthwhile targets, then split his squadron into two six-plane divisions. The first chose what looked like a heavy cruiser (actually the large minelayer *Tsugaru*) but, hampered by

Seen at sea early in 1942 is the U.S. carrier Yorktown *in a photo taken from a Douglas TBD-1 Devastator torpedo bomber just launched by the same carrier. The photo shows another TBD-1 near the carrier's superstructure, or "island," while on the flight deck nearby are Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless dive bombers and Grumman F4F-3 Wildcat fighters.*

bombsights and windshields that fogged when the SBDs hit the moist, warmer lower air, managed only two "close misses" out of the six 1,000-pounders dropped. The second division, armed with 500-pounders, took on the transports. They claimed two direct hits on *China Maru* but actually scored one (their quarry disappeared momentarily in geysers of spray from near-misses). Fogged sights and windshields affected the second division as it had the first, forcing *Lexington*'s pilots to drop their ordnance practically blind.

The torpedo pilots fared a bit better. Three immediately pounced on the transports *Yokohama Maru* and *China Maru* as they lay off Salamaua. Their Mark XIIIs set for a depth of 15 feet, the pilots of this trio of Devastators squinted into their directors and fired their "fish." Ensign Harold R. Mazza, USNR, in 2-T-9, dropped his torpedo from an altitude of 35 feet, at a range of 1,000 yards; it punched into *Yokohama Maru*'s vitals and she began to settle. Lieutenant Edwin W. Hurst, Jimmy Brett's exec, in 2-T-7, and Ensign Robert B. Forward, USNR, in 2-T-8, however, did not enjoy such good fortune. Their torpedoes, launched against *China Maru*, which drew only eight feet when lightly laden, churned under the ship's keel—"Rosy" Hurst's running erratically en route—and blew up on the beach.

Brett, in 2-T-1, led the remainder of VT-2 out over Huon Gulf. Three of this group headed for Lae. Lieutenant Robert F. Farrington, in 2-T-10, and Lieutenant (j.g.) L. F. Steffenhagen, in 2-T-2, bore in on *Kongo Maru*. Farrington slowed his TBD to 90 knots (less than half the Devastator's maximum speed) and dropped his Mark XIII from an altitude of 30 feet, 1,500 yards away from his target. His "fish" ran straight and true, and holed the armed merchant cruiser's stern. Steffenhagen's torpedo, though, ran too deep and went beneath his quarry, blowing up on the shore beyond. Throttling back to 100 knots, Ensign Norman M. Sterrie, USNR, in 2-T-11, dropped his torpedo at 1,200 yards, from an altitude of 35 feet, and scored a solid hit on *Kokai Maru*.

Tenyo Maru, no doubt shaken up by her bout with Scouting Two, managed to emerge unhit by Torpedo Two, despite the best efforts of five pilots—including Brett. Chief Aviation Pilot M.H. Georgius and Gunner Curtis Hamilton, and Ensign Thomas B. Bash all watched their torpedoes run too deep. Lieutenant French Wampler, in still another torpedo plane, chose to attack *Tenyo Maru* from the starboard side (all the others had tried from the port), hoping to achieve a better angle. He, too, experienced the fist-clenching frustration of seeing his "fish" run beneath the target. Gunner Harley E. Talkington dropped his Mark XIII against a destroyer (perhaps *Tsugaru*), which easily evaded his torpedo. Chief Aviation Pilot Bruce C. Shearon, flying the decidedly unlucky number 13 plane (2-T-13), inadvertently released his torpedo in the excitement of the moment—the ultimate frustration.

The sudden destruction from the skies evidently surprised the Japanese, for the SR invasion convoy lay virtually bereft of air cover off its newly secured beachheads. It was a situation that must have given the convoy commander, Rear Admiral Kajioka Sadamichi, an uncomfortable experience of *deja vu:* he had been the commander of the Wake Island invasion force the previous December when U.S. Marine planes—Grumman F4F-3s—had caused considerable damage, out of proportion to their meager numbers. Once again, his flagship, the light cruiser *Yubari*, would be the target of American pilots eager to avenge Pearl Harbor.

Kajioka's ships scattered for open water from the roadstead at Salamaua, although the auxiliaries suffered heavily at the outset. *Yubari*, *Tsugaru*, and the destroyers *Yunagi*, *Oite*, and *Asanagi* all maneuvered hard and made smoke to cover their movements. All put up a moderate amount of small-caliber antiaircraft fire.

Some 25 miles east of Lae, lay Kajioka's air support, such as it was, the seaplane carrier *Kiyokawa Maru*—a converted freighter—and the destroyer *Mochizuki*, both ships operating under *Kiyokawa Maru*'s captain. The seaplane carrier's embarked air unit consisted of a mixed bag of Nakajima E8N2 Type 95 and Mitsubishi F1M2 Type 00 reconnaissance floatplanes, the latter called "Pete" and the former, "Dave," in Allied lexicon.

As the American attack developed with dramatic suddenness, a lone Nakajima Type 95, coded R-18, unhesitatingly waded into the fray. The brave pilot and rear-seat man of the open-cockpit, two-seater biplane sparked grudging admiration in their adversaries. Four SBDs of VS-2 attempted to corner the enemy pilot as he went after the torpedo planes off Lae, but failed to bring him to book. "A slick little guy," marveled Thach later. "All four of them couldn't do much with him. He was the most courageous Jap I'd seen." One SBD suffered four scattered rifle-caliber hits, two others a pair of hits apiece, and one only one hit. Ultimately, a burst from the four .50-caliber

machine guns of the F4F-3 flown by VF-3's flight officer, Lieutenant Noel A. N. Gayler, knocked the Type 95 into the water.

With a hornet's nest bestirred by the *Lexington*'s men, the *Yorktowners* were not far behind. Within 20 minutes, Bob Armstrong led Bombing Five to the attack on the ships off Salamaua harbor. The squadron split into three divisions: the first led by Armstrong, the second by Lieutenant Samuel Adams, an accomplished dive-bombing tactician, and the third by Lieutenant William S. Guest, Adams' roommate on board *Yorktown* and the man who had scored the only direct hit on a Japanese ship during the weather-plagued Jaluit raid the previous month.

Although also vexed by fogging telescopic sights and windshields, Armstrong's half-dozen SBD-3s bracketed *Yubari* with 500- and 100-pound bombs, bouncing shrapnel off her sides and showering her with spray that rained down on her decks like a cloudburst. Adams' division did likewise; the pilots claimed three direct hits on *Yubari* and three "probables" from their six 500-pounders and six 100-pounders. Guest's group dropped its 500-pound bombs on *Yubari*, too, but wisely saved its smaller ordnance for other ships. Success rewarded that care: his pilots scored hits with 100-pounders on *Asanagi* and *Yunagi*. Guest's planes also strafed a nearby "gunboat"—perhaps the converted minesweeper *Tama Maru No. 2*—and set her afire.

Bill Burch, commanding VS-5, split his squadron into two divisions and pushed over at 1005 above Lae. Burch, with seven planes, jumped *Kokai Maru* and *Kongo Maru*, while his aggressive and highly competent executive officer, Lieutenant Wallace C. Short, Jr., took six planes to tackle *Tenyo Maru*. Burch's pilots scored at least two direct hits on each of the ships—Burch getting one himself—while determined strafing with the SBDs' fixed .50-caliber machine guns stilled the antiaircraft fire coming from their decks. Short's division, meanwhile, roughed up the third ship, with Short, too, scoring a direct hit, reporting her "on fire and sinking when beached." In return, antiaircraft fire only made superficial fragment holes in the tail section of one of the SBDs. As Scouting Five cleared the area, its targets lay beached and burning. Lieutenant Turner F. Caldwell, Jr., Lieutenant Hugh W. Nicholson, USNR, Ensign Kendall C. Campbell, USNR, and Lieutenant (j.g.) Stanley W. "Swede" Vejtasa, all claimed direct bomb hits. Although one pilot, Ensign Samuel J. Underhill, USNR, "missed by a mile" on this, his first combat mission, his Radioman 2nd Class James H. Cales noted with satisfaction that at least *he* had gotten off some good shots from his .30-caliber Browning!

At 1020, Joe Taylor, a Naval Academy classmate and close friend of Scouting Five's Bill Burch, led Torpedo Five to Lae and up the coast, looking for fair game. He soon perceived off Hanisch Harbor the seaplane carrier *Kiyokawa Maru*, with four planes on deck, and the destroyer *Mochizuki*. Operating in the high-level bombing role, since doubt had been entertained about the ability of a Devastator to make it over the Owen Stanleys with a Mark XIII, Taylor's TBDs, armed with pairs of 500-pound bombs slung side-by-side beneath them, commenced their runs at 13,000 to 14,000 feet.

The lack of experienced bomb-sight operators, however, considerably handicapped Torpedo Five. Only one bomb of the 24 dropped landed near enough to the converted freighter to do any damage. A close miss aft from one of the first division's planes, however, opened *Kiyokawa Maru*'s engine room to the sea and stopped the Japanese ship cold.

One of the seaplane carrier's Type 95s managed to get aloft, and truculently tackled the ship's tormentors. The rear-seat men of one section of Torpedo Five, however, proved equal to the challenge posed by the little gray floatplane bearing the code R-22 on its vertical fin and rudder. Radioman 1st Class Angus M. Shirah, Jr., and Radiomen 3rd Class Eugene W. Jones and Don D. Allen handled their three .30-calibers with such accuracy and skill that their shots holed one of the Nakajima's floats. When the plane returned to its parent ship later, it turned turtle soon after landing, forcing its crew to swim for it.

The fighters of VF-42, like those from VF-3, did what they could to contribute to the destruction. Drawing fire away from the dive bombers—as VF-3 had done for the Dauntlesses and Devastators of the *Lexington* group—"Swede" Pederson's pilots strafed ships and shore installations at low-level and peppered fragmentation bombs on whatever targets presented themselves ashore. Pilots of the four F4F-3s accompanying the planes at Salamaua strafed enemy boats in the water attempting to rescue men from the doomed *Yokohama Maru*.

After expending all of the bombs and torpedoes they had lugged over the mountains, the two carriers' air groups cleared the area, their return shepherded by Bill Ault. As a *Lexington* pilot had been the first on the scene, so too was one of its number the last to leave. Lieutenant (j.g.) Joseph G. Smith, USNR, of VS-2, lingered to assess the results. Then he also set course for home.

Having reported the completion of his squadron's attack at 0945, Lieutenant Commander Dixon, in 2-S-1, arrived over the task force an hour later. At 1046, his SBD roared low over *Lexington*, a weighted bean-bag plummeting to the flight deck. Dixon's laconic message was the first indication of what had occurred in the raid; he reported three large transports off Lae, all hit by VS-2's bombs, no air opposition, and only scattered antiaircraft fire. He also reported the presence of other ships at Salamaua and in the roadstead.

"Lady Lex" commenced recovery operations at 1057 and, except for a brief delay caused by repairs to a parted arrestor cable, completed the evolution before noon. Only one plane, 2-S-8, had not returned. On board the *Yorktown*, her men had eagerly followed the action via the radio, much like sports fans listening to their favorite ball games and rooting for the home team. To newsman Bill Hipple, the banter indicated that "the planes were certainly having great success." As he later observed the return of *Yorktown*'s air group, he noted: "They came near the carrier and flew around. The planes had personality—they seemed to fly jubilantly now, their motors seem to purr . . . one by one, the planes came down, coming to a jaunty halt on the flight deck. Pilots and aircrew alighted from the planes, happy and smiling, but as calm as if they'd just returned from a routine patrol flight." By 1201, all planes of the attack group had returned, the men reporting three cargo ships hit and beached off Lae, a seaplane tender stopped east of Salamaua, a light cruiser hit at least four times, two destroyers stopped by 100-pound bombs, one large transport listing heavily, and another sunk off Salamaua—overall, of course, an overly optimistic report.

On board the *Yorktown*, elated pilots urged Rear Admiral Fletcher to send them back. Brown, however, perhaps feeling he had pushed his luck, decided against it. As he reported later: "No second attack was made because the damage to enemy shipping found in the attack area was considered to be decisive and complete." Carrying out precautionary CAP and anti-torpedo plane patrols,

Brown's TF-11 shaped a retiring course from the Gulf of Papua. Although a prowling Japanese flying boat spotted the ships, they cleared the area unmolested. Army Air Force B-17s and Australian Hudsons afterwards raided Lae and Salamaua, the latter engaged spiritedly by Type 95 and Type 00 floatplanes, but the heaviest damage to the Japanese had already been inflicted.

Lack of familiarity with Japanese ships and the rudimentary nature of anti-shipping tactics made damage assessment difficult. Smoke screens and radical maneuvering generated confusion among eyewitnesses as to number, location, and damage. For *Yorktown*'s scouting and bombing squadrons, instantaneous fuses on bombs—rather than delayed-action—limited the damage from a direct hit. Only one-third of *Lexington*'s bombs had been instantaneous-fused. For one of the torpedo squadrons, the Mark XIIIs ran erratically; for the other, the lack of opportunities to practice high-level bombing limited the success it could have achieved. In later years, SBD pilots would also recall a "hurry up and drop the bomb" mentality.

Nevertheless, the first coordinated American attack against enemy ships and shore establishments by two carrier air groups resulted in the sinking of *Kongo Maru*, *Tenyo Maru*, *Yokohama Maru*, and *Tama Maru No. 2*. Near-misses and strafing accounted for damage to *Yubari* (which soon had to return to Japan for repairs, having suffered 14 killed and 49 wounded—more casualties than she had received off Wake), to the destroyers *Yunagi*, *Oite* and *Asanagi*, to the minesweeper *Tama Maru*, and to the *Kiyokawa Maru* and *Kokai Maru*. One hundred and thirty men had been killed, another 245 wounded. Lamented Air Warrant Officer Nemeto Kumesaka of *Kiyokawa Maru*: "Our ship is badly damaged. I clearly realized how helpless a ship can be." It was, he recorded in his diary, "our biggest loss since the beginning of the war." His ship would sail for Rabaul two days hence, then to Japan. It was June before the seaplane carrier would resume active operations.

Among the American pilots, who had inflicted far more damage than they had received, the raid buoyed spirits. One *Yorktown* SBD pilot told Bill Hipple, "It was a cinch—a dive bomber's field day." For his part, Hipple proved exceptionally astute in his evaluation of the raid, calling it dangerous and difficult," but carried out in a "magnificent" manner, the product of "careful planning and meticulous attention to detail." This "bold and successful stroke," Hipple wrote, "definitely delayed the Japanese southward drive."

Vice Admiral Brown considered the strike "highly successful." Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, CINCPAC, however, waxed less sanguine. He downplayed the results, noting that the raid had not dislodged the enemy from his new beachheads in New Guinea. "Even with the damage inflicted," CINCPAC's war diarist opined, "it is doubtful that the enemy will be greatly retarded."

Nothing could have been further from the truth. Events would soon prove the assessment of Brown and Associated Press war correspondent Hipple to have been far closer to the mark than CINCPAC's. Within a few days of the raid, Japanese planners were positing that future operations in that theater would require the support of at least one carrier division. The transmontane raid on Lae and Salamaua forced the enemy—already overextended in the region and operating on the proverbial "shoestring"—to postpone his projected movement toward Tulagi and Port Moresby for one month, until more amphibious shipping could be gathered to cover the losses incurred at Lae and Salamaua and air support marshalled for the thrust. The presence of American carriers made an invasion plan for

TOP: The American carrier task force approached the Japanese enemy at Lae and Salamaua from the far side of New Guinea, then launched its air strike of March 10, 1942, through a mountain pass (blue arrow). ABOVE: A closer view shows the disposition of the Japanese ships caught by surprise in the raid—sunk were Kongo Maru, Tenyo Maru, Yokohama Maru *and* Tama Maru No. 2 *(not shown here); damaged were* Yubari, Yunagi, Oite, Asanagi, Tama Maru *(not shown),* Kiyokawa Maru *and* Kokai Maru.

Port Moresby more difficult, since Japan possessed no carriers in the area to meet the challenge posed by her enemy's mobile air bases. By the time the Japanese had their own "flattops" in position to cover operations in the Solomons, the Americans had already placed their own carriers there to meet them—aided by important intelligence gleaned through breaking the enemy's naval code. The Battle of the Coral Sea was the end result.

On March 17, the day before the Navy Department released Communique No. 57 announcing the Lae-Salamaua raid but not divulging the ships that had participated in it, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a message to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The chief executive described the "good go we had at them (the Japanese) in New Guinea the other day," and recounted the damage thought to have been inflicted on the enemy. "All in all it was a good day's work because we got away with the loss of only one plane and our information indicates the Japs still don't know how they were hit." Roosevelt then concluded, more correctly than his senior naval commanders could have realized at the time, "It was by all means the best day's work we have had." □

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Throw of the Iron Dice

As the Battle of Kursk raged, Soviet General Rotmistrov sent his T-34 tanks into the corridor formed by a small river and a rail embankment. No sooner had the advance begun than the German II SS *Panzer* Corps swung into the same corridor from the opposite end—collision was inevitable.

By Bruce R. Pirnie

In the spring of 1943, Colonel General Heinz Guderian, then assigned as the Inspector General of *Panzer* troops, asked Hitler: "*Mein Fuehrer*, why do you want to attack at all in the East this year?" Hitler replied: "You're right. Whenever I think of this attack, my stomach turns over."

It was the proposed operation against Kursk that Hitler found so unsettling. Despite the qualms, though, Hitler issued the order for a giant converging attack on the Kursk salient, an operation codenamed CITADEL. And the order for CITADEL was drenched in Hitler's typical bravado, with perhaps a touch of desperation, as though his stomach were still churning.

In his Operations Order Number 6, Hitler wrote: "This offensive is of decisive importance. It must be carried out quickly and shatteringly. It must give us the initiative for the spring and summer of this year. The best units, the best armies, the best leaders, large stocks of ammunition are to be placed at the decisive points. Every officer and every man must be indoctrinated with the decisive significance of this offensive. The victory of Kursk must be a beacon to the world."

Why would Hitler forego his anxiety and decide to force a decisive battle for Kursk? Why would he insist on another throw of the iron dice—was he like the gambler who has lost heavily and insists on trying for double or nothing? The answers lie partly in Hitler's compulsive personality and partly in Germany's situation during the spring of 1943.

In early 1943, Germany was in a threatening strategic situation sliding toward the catastrophic. A two-front war had begun, and Germany seemed to be losing on both fronts. British and American forces were well on their way to victory in North Africa, as they drove the Axis forces into the northeastern corner of Tunisia. The last of these trapped units would surrender by May 12, leaving the

German assault troops move into the line past a disabled Russian T-34 tank as part of the German attack on the Kursk salient in Russia. This offensive of July 1943 was a desperate gamble by Hitler to compensate for the loss of his Sixth Army at Stalingrad—his best hope to repeat the successes of earlier summer offensives and blunt the rapidly increasing power of the revitalized Red Army.

An artist's depiction of a German infantryman about to hurl a hand grenade at a Soviet tank. Kursk was a battle noted for close-quarters combat—the infantrymen of both sides often found themselves confronted by enemy tanks.

Western Allies in an excellent position to attack Italy, the weaker of the Axis partners. Hitler was under no illusion about Italian strength. He sincerely admired Mussolini, but Hitler realized that Italian fascism was a thin veneer and the Italians had little heart for the war. Italy could collapse quickly under the weight of an invasion, to leave Germany without a single strong Continental ally.

On the Eastern Front at the same time, Germany's situation was almost as bleak. Victory was beyond grasp—even a draw might be difficult to achieve. The loss of Field Marshal Friedrich von Paulus' Sixth Army at Stalingrad during the winter had unhinged the German position in the Ukraine. In a series of quick offensives, the Soviets had advanced well beyond the Donets River, their armies wiping out the German gains of the previous summer. During February and March, however, Field Marshal Erich von Manstein had conducted a brilliant counterattack that regained the great industrial city of Kharkov. Spearheading this counterattack was the II SS *Panzer* Corps with the famous SS divisions *Das Reich* and *Totenkopf*. For a few heady weeks, it looked as though von Manstein could assert the old German superiority over the Red Army. Then came the spring rains, and the Soviet roads turned promptly into ribbons of sticky mud. Both sides stopped in exhaustion and mutually awaited the return of good campaigning weather.

The seesaw winter fighting had left the sprawling Eastern Front with a very uneven trace. Both German and Soviet forces were deployed in long, dangerous salients, or projections from their respective front lines. Von Manstein's success had left the German Fourth *Panzer* Army in a salient anchored on Kharkov and Belgorod. Second *Panzer* Army, assigned to Field Marshal Günther von Kluge's Army Group Center, was also in a salient, this one centered on the city of Orel. Between the two German salients lay a corresponding Soviet-held salient that included the very modest industrial city of Kursk.

Even by the vast territorial standards of the Eastern Front, the Soviet salient was imposing. At its base, it measured about 70 miles from north to south. It jutted about 90 miles into German-occupied Russia, as if an arm of the Red Army had been thrust into the juncture of the German Army Group Center and Army Group South (formerly Army Group Ukraine).

Seen on a large-scale map, the Kursk salient stuck out so obtrusively, it was the first place any armchair strategist would have expected the Germans to attack. Indeed, for the Germans, Kursk's main drawback in late spring of 1943 was exactly this *obvious* quality. It was the very first place the Soviets could logically have expected the Germans to strike. Another drawback was the precarious position of the German armies in their own salients. If they failed in an attack on the Kursk salient and reeled back in exhaustion, it might become a question of who was swallowing whom. Yet if the Germans did nothing, the Soviets might take full advantage of their own large salient,

not simply an arm, but rather a dagger pointed at the German midriff.

Hitler's basic instinct always was to strike. He had made his political and his military reputations on his willingness to strike hard, decisive blows where a prudent man might have held back. Occasionally this instinct had played him false, as in the failed Munich *Putsch* of 1923. But Hitler had turned even that fiasco to his advantage by portraying himself as a nationalist martyr. In the military sphere, his campaigns against Poland and France, his Balkan campaign and his initial successes in the Soviet Union had made him appear for a time invincible, although after 1941 some of his officers were privately convinced that Hitler was overreaching himself. Boldness, audacity, even recklessness, were Hitler's stock in trade. He had a blind faith in his own destiny and the power of his will. As the circle of his enemies closed on him, Hitler naturally looked for another place to strike the decisive blow. This was the familiar Hitlerian style that would also produce the Ardennes offensive (Battle of the Bulge) in December 1944. It simply was not in Hitler's character to accept a defensive strategy until it was imposed on him by force.

The original concept for his Operation CITADEL came from Col. Gen. Kurt Zeitzler. This officer had replaced Col. Gen. Franz Halder as Army Chief of Staff in late 1942 when Halder refused to accept responsibility for the feckless strategy that was leading to disaster at Stalingrad. Plucked from relative obscurity as the commander of an army group based in Holland, Zeitzler was junior in rank and experience to such field commanders as von Manstein and von Kluge, but Zeitzler was a bundle of energy and he was determined to make his mark.

During the spring thaw of 1943, Zeitzler surveyed the front and naturally felt drawn to the Kursk salient. He reasoned that a successful converging attack would cut off the Soviet forces in the salient and produce a great German victory like those battles of encirclement that marked the first year of Hitler's war against Russia. Of course, the Soviet salient would then cease to threaten the German front—it no longer would drive a wedge between the two army groups. Elimination of the salient would shorten the front and free German forces for employment elsewhere, probably in Western Europe or in Italy. If the Kursk operation went very well, such success might also lead to greater things, although Zeitzler had no definite plans to exploit a resounding success.

Hitler immediately had been attracted to the concept of a Kursk offensive, but before reaching his decision, he indulged in several months of shillyshallying, as though he hesitated to take the plunge. On 22 March, he issued an order for Operation HABICHT, a modest thrust over the Donets River in the Kharkov-Izyum area that might have produced a local success. Then, two days later, he gave an order for Operation PANTHER, a more ambitious operation to be executed by the First and Fourth *Panzer* Armies. But with the Donets River in full flood, Hitler postponed both operations until there was no time for them, if CITADEL were to be executed at all promptly. On 15 April, he issued his Operations Order Number 6 that announced with such fanfare his decision for the Kursk operation. He clearly thirsted after a great victory in the old style, with vast numbers of prisoners and a shattering effect on Germany's enemies. Kursk was to provide that victory.

No sooner was the grandiose order issued, however, than new delays occurred. Ninth Army, which was supposed to control the offensive starting from the Orel salient, reported it could not complete its deployment until 3 May. Then came reports from aerial reconnaissance that

TOP: Combat-hardened Panzer grenadiers *of the II SS* Panzerkorps, *some riding on their tanks, move against the Soviet defenders of General Vatutin's Voronezh Front. The* Waffen-SS *troops were the only German combat units to wear camouflage uniforms with the distinctive spotted pattern. ABOVE: A Soviet guncrew prepares to fire a 76.2mm M1939 field gun. Although this weapon was the standard Soviet field gun in 1941, it was designed to be used as an antitank gun as well, and both the Russians and the Germans (who captured many of them and converted them to their 7.62cm PAK antitank gun) thought highly of its antitank capabilities.*

the Soviets were reinforcing the Kursk salient. At the end of April came several days of heavy rains that mired the roads again. In the face of these delays, Hitler called a high-level conference to meet in Munich on 4 May. Present at this conference were Zeitzler, Guderian, Arms and Munitions Minister Albert Speer, von Kluge, von Manstein, and von Kluge's subordinate, Col. Gen. Walther Model, commanding the Ninth Army.

Hitler opened the proceedings himself with a 45-minute assessment of the general situation on the Eastern Front as seen from his perspective. Then he solicited the opinions of those present. He obviously accorded particular attention to Model, the Ninth Army commander. Model was an officer with the qualities that pleased Hitler most. He was that rarity among German generals, an ardent Nazi flushed with the ideals of the Third Reich. He was also an energetic and aggressive commander full of self-confidence, but he opposed Operation CITADEL.

Model produced aerial photographs that showed the Soviets were constructing extensive field fortifications near the neck of their salient, where Ninth Army would have to attack. Even more ominously, the Soviets had withdrawn most of their armored forces from areas west of Kursk, as though gathering a reserve force. This intelligence allowed only one conclusion: the Soviets expected an offensive towards Kursk and they were prepared for it.

Von Manstein, the commander of Army Group South, previously had favored CITADEL (in April, when he

thought the Soviets were off balance), but now he was less enthusiastic. He thought the operation could still succeed in May, but he considered any further delay to be dangerous. Guderian and Speer were flatly opposed to CITADEL because they needed time to build up Germany's armored forces after the heavy losses of the winter campaign. They were beginning to produce the new Panther and Tiger tanks, weapons that promised to restore German supremacy on the battlefield, but only if they were available in sufficient numbers.

Von Kluge, the commander of Army Group Center, may have been miffed because his subordinate Model enjoyed Hitler's favor—he said that Model's army was in better strengh than Model thought and it could well take the offensive. Naturally, Zeitzler was an enthusiastic advocate of his own operation, and he had the advantage of speaking for the High Command of the Army. Faced with this division of opinion among his generals, Hitler deferred a decision on CITADEL, but he privately told Model that it would be postponed. A few days after the conference, Zeitzler's headquarters announced that Operation CITADEL was postponed to 12 June. In response to a protest from a field commander, Zeitzler explained that Hitler was waiting for the new armored weapons to arrive at the front.

Hitler was always entranced by weaponry, especially by weapons of great size. After listening to Guderian and Speer, he decided that postponing CITADEL might be an advantage if new armored weapons would be available to spearhead the attack. Two of these weapons are highly familiar to students of World War II: the Mark V Panther and the Mark VI Tiger tanks. The Panther had an uneven development history behind it. Originally designed at 35 tons, it had been up-armored and modified until it reached 45 tons. As a result, the engine had to be replaced, and the drive train was stressed to its limit. The Panthers that would be available for CITADEL were still suffering from design weaknesses typical of weapons rushed too quickly into production. The Henschel Tiger, designated *Panzer-Kampfwagen VI*, had undergone competitive trials as a prototype in 1942 and was more mature than the Panther. The Tiger weighed 56 tons with its 88mm gun and frontal armor up to 10 centimeters thick. It was, simply, the most formidable tank in the world.

Still another weapon engaged Hitler's attention, one rather less familiar than the tanks. It was originally called Ferdinand, after its designer, the famous Dr. Ferdinand Porsche, better known for his Volkswagen and Porsche cars. The name Ferdinand was subsequently changed to Elephant, perhaps an even better choice. After losing the Tiger tank competition to Henschel, the Porsche company was left with 90 unused tank chassis. On these the company chose to mount 88mm guns in fixed turrets of enormous size. The result can be described as a heavily armored assault gun with good potential as a tank killer if and when a tank presented itself. Were weight alone a virtue, the Ferdinand would have been a wonder weapon—it tipped the scales at 68 tons, far heavier then a Tiger. Unfortunately, we are forever denied a look at two Ferdinand variants that were planned but never built. One of these was a ram-tank designed to ram other tanks (and small buildings). The other would have mounted a 210mm mortar, a good-sized weapon even for such a huge vehicle. Only two battalions of Ferdinands were ready in time for Operation CITADEL, and their debut proved so unpromising that they made no subsequent appearances on the Eastern Front.

While the Germans took time to build their strength, the Soviets prepared their defense of the Kursk salient. They proceeded on the assumption that the Germans were just strong enough to mount one major operation, and the most likely objective was Kursk.

Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov, then serving as the special representative of the General Staff, submitted a report on April 8 that predicted Operation CITADEL with great accuracy. According to Zhukov, the Germans were building up their forces opposite the Central Front, the Voronezh Front and the South-Western Front—in all, that is, surrounding the Kursk salient. Zhukov anticipated an attempt to envelop the Central and Voronezh Fronts and a subsequent advance towards Moscow if that envelopment succeeded. He estimated that the Germans could deploy about 2,500 tanks for this operation, an assessment that was right on the mark. Zhukov recommended that his high command deploy some 30 antitank regiments from quiet sectors to the Kursk salient. He also recommended deployment of strong reserves east of the salient's neck. In conclusion, Zhukov wrote this remarkable paragraph: "I do not believe it is necessary for our forces to mount a preventive offensive in the next few days. It would be better if we wear down the enemy in defensive actions, destroy his tanks, and then, taking in fresh reserves and going over to an all-out offensive, we will finish off the enemy's main group of forces."

On April 12, Zhukov and the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Aleksander M. Vasilevsky, presented their suggestions to Stalin. These two officers were in full agreement with each other. They both recommended a concentration of force to defend the Kursk salient. Although Stalin remained concerned that the Germans might attempt to advance on Moscow, he generally agreed with his marshals. During the conference, it was decided to construct very strong field fortifications in the salient and not to involve the strategic reserves of the High Command, but simply to concentrate them near the point of greatest danger.

Most importantly of all, however, the conference produced a decision for deliberate defense, rather than a preemptive Soviet offensive or a spoiling attack. In other words, Stalin took the excellent advice that Zhukov had offered four days earlier. In his history of Soviet operations in the summer and fall of 1943, Boris Solovyov emphasizes how extraordinary this decision was. The Soviets considered themselves the stronger side in the spring of 1943, and their own military doctrine stressed the vital importance of taking the offensive and holding the initiative. Why, then, were they willing at Kursk to await a German attack? Because in this case they wanted to see the Germans exhaust their armored strength in a hopeless attack. Afterwards, the Germans would be too weak to stop a Soviet counteroffensive. This was a masterful strategy, and Stalin—along with his marshals—deserves credit for adopting it.

Soviet historical writing reveals that the Russians had detailed and timely intelligence about German preparations for Operation CITADEL, but is coy about the sources. The most likely source would have been the mysterious "Lucy," the code name for Rudolf Roessler, a German with anti-Nazi sentiments who took up residence in Switzerland in 1934. His subsequent reports to the Soviets included schedules of troop movements, operational planning, and statistics on German industrial output and manpower—information so precise it almost certainly came from a source close to the German High Command, possibly an officer as disaffected as Roessler was. There is even speculation that the British may have used "Lucy" to

Soviet T-34/76 tanks accompanied by infantry advance against enemy positions. Tanks of both sides were usually accompanied by either motorized or dismounted infantry units for protection and suppression of enemy antitank guns or tank hunter-killer teams. INSET: Russian General Nikolai Vatutin (right), the commander of the Voronezh Front, with Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev (holding field glasses) at the battle of Kursk. After the Russian victory at Kursk, Vatutin went on to re-take Kharkov (the fourth and last time the city changed masters since 1941), and then Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine. He was ambushed and killed in March 1944 by a group of anti-Soviet Ukrainian partisans. Khrushchev survived the war to become the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR and the ruler of the Soviet Union from 1957 to 1964.

play intelligence to the Soviets, who distrusted information received outright from the Churchill government. However he got the information, Roessler gave the Soviets the operational plan for CITADEL before Hitler issued his Order Number 6 on April 15. This was an intelligence coup of the first magnitude. The Soviets did not have to guess about German intentions; they knew exactly what to expect, where and in what strength.

If Hitler had begun Operation CITADEL promptly, the Soviets might have been hard pressed to defend the salient. But his postponements gave them ample time to prepare a powerful, deeply echeloned defense. Defending the salient itself were Konstantin Rokossovsky's Central Front and Nikolai Vatutin's Voronezh Front. Behind them was General (later Marshal) Ivan S. Konev's Steppe Front, held in the reserve of the High Command until it could do the most good. These forces were superior to the Germans', and the Soviets knew it. According to Soviet accounts, the Central (northwest edge of the salient) and Voronezh (southern salient edge) Fronts totaled more than 1.3 million men, about 19,000 guns and mortars, and about 3,450 tanks and self-propelled guns. Against these forces, the Germans could deploy about 570,000 men, 10,000 guns, and 2,500 tanks and self-propelled guns. Only in aviation were the two sides about equal, each having slightly more than 2,000 aircraft.

Terrain within the Kursk salient was only moderately good tank country, and it offered many defensive positions. In general, it was a rolling plain of cultivated fields and scattered patches of forest. But it was broken by numerous small valleys and streams. There were many small villages, but almost no urban areas. Kursk itself had only about 120,000 inhabitants. Using their time to the full, the Soviets set about fortifying the area. They mobilized up to 300,000 civilians in the region to help dig defensive emplacements and antitank obstacles. Troops of the Central and Voronezh Fronts dug more than 9,000 kilometers of trenches. They constructed six defensive zones to a depth of about 300 kilometers at the most. Thus at the neck of the salient there was no line that could be broken, only successive layers of fall-back positions. The Soviets deployed their antitank guns with special care to accomplish converging, annihilating fire. Up to ten guns were organized under one command, so they could be directed simultaneously against the same targets. The Soviets planted large numbers of mines and covered their minefields with fire. Prior to CITADEL, the Germans photographed the Kursk salient thoroughly. These photographs showed that the Soviets were digging in, but they did not reveal enough detail to be of much use tactically—the Soviets were masters of camouflage. In fact, camouflage and a variety of deceptive measures were something of a Soviet specialty, called *maskirovka* in Russian. By July, the Germans could hardly have chosen a worse place to attack than the Kursk salient.

Behind the German lines, meanwhile, the Soviets employed partisans in raids against the supply routes, particularly the railways. By this time, the partisans were growing in number, despite vigorous German efforts to suppress them. To the inhabitants of occupied Russia, two facts long since had become apparent: the Germans were not liberators, and they were not winning the war. When the Soviets re-established their power, it would be well for a man if he could display a solid record of service with the

partisans. The Soviets organized the partisans under Front control, infiltrated regular officers to lead them, and directed partisan activities to complement their military operations. During the month of June, the Germans reported 1,092 separate attacks against the rail lines so vital to their resupply.

The time for action was fast approaching. On 1 July, von Manstein was ordered to report to Hitler's headquarters, the famous Wolf's Lair in the forests of East Prussia near Rastenburg. When the generals were assembled in one of the Lair's small, rustic buildings, Hitler announced that Operation CITADEL would begin on 5 July. He especially cautioned his officers about security: "This time we must make absolutely sure that nothing of our intention is betrayed through carelessness or neglect."

Almost the same evening, the Soviet High Command learned of the plan. Stalin immediately notified his Front commanders that, according to available information, the Germans might go on the offensive between 3 and 6 July. Troops of the Central Front and Voronezh Front went on full alert, crouched in their trenches awaiting the attack. In the area of Rokossovsky's Central Front, a Soviet patrol caught some German engineer troops breaching a minefield. Under interrogation, the German prisoners revealed that an attack was scheduled for the morning of 5 July. On the basis of this and other information, Rokossovsky and Vatutin ordered artillery preparations to begin before dawn. Soviet artillery of the Central Front promptly laid down a heavy barrage on the German lines. Shortly afterwards, the Germans opened fire.

German tactics centered on the shock action of armor. Armor was deployed in wedge formations with the most capable vehicles forward and infantry in support. Concentrated on narrow sectors, these armored wedges inevitably made some progress, but at great cost in the armor that would be necessary to exploit a breakthrough, if one ever actually occurred.

On the northern edge of the salient, Model had concentrated six infantry divisions and a *Panzer* division in a ten-mile sector. The armored spearhead consisted of battalions of Tiger tanks and Ferdinand self-propelled guns that were to smash through the Soviet defenses. It was quickly obvious, however, that the massive Ferdinand lacked mobility and the ability to defend itself. With limited traverse, poor visibility and no machine guns, the Ferdinand was almost helpless except when it was carefully defended by infantry. The Tigers, on the other hand, were effective engines of war, but they were too few to overcome the seemingly endless Soviet defenses. And, as often in the past, the Soviet soldiers were resolute defenders. They were willing to fight to the last cartridge, tough to dislodge, and quick to return to any position the Germans were too weak to hold. On some occasions, the Soviet infantry planted mines behind the advancing German tanks. Model was soon in trouble and never made much progress. At least he had the questionable satisfaction of seeing his own warnings fulfilled.

On the southern side of the Kursk salient, von Manstein had greater success, and here the decisive engagements were fought. His assault forces, organized into the Fourth *Panzer* Army and Army Detachment Kempf, contained some of the most famous German divisions of the war. They included the mechanized infantry division *Grossdeutschland*, the only named division in the German Army. Subordinate to Fourth *Panzer* Army was II SS *Panzer* Corps with the divisions *Das Reich*, *Totenkopf*, and *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*. In operational reserve, von Manstein had *Viking*, another well-known SS division with a distinguished combat record. The soldiers of the *Waffen* SS considered themselves to be a military elite, the best shock troops in the world's finest army. Kursk was to be perhaps the most sanguinary battle these elite troops ever fought. When they collided with the tough Soviet defenders, the battle became a classic case of the irresistible force that met the immovable object.

During the early afternoon of 4 July, von Manstein's offensive began with battalion-sized attacks to breach the

DEFENSE IN DEPTH

The Russian defenses at Kursk rank among the most densely developed and effectively used lines of earthworks ever constructed for a single battle.

The Soviet forces constructed a series of defensive zones, each one up to three miles deep with five or more lines of parallel trenches, all connected by communications trenches. The second defensive zone lay about seven miles behind the first, and the third lay 20 miles behind the second zone. The Soviets also dug hundreds of miles of antitank ditches to supplement their field fortifications.

Indeed, the most impressive aspect of their defenses was their antitank protection, consisting of layers of thick mine fields protected by infantry small arms fire and antitank guns. On the Central Front, it was claimed that almost a half-million mines were laid with a density of 2,400 antitank and 2,700 antipersonnel mines a mile. (At that time, the normal density for antitank mines was 1,800 per mile of front.) A German staff officer recalled that the Soviets could lay mines with incredible swiftness—two or three days were enough time for them to lay 30,000 mines.

Thousands of antitank guns and artillery pieces covered the minefields. The Central and Voronezh Fronts each boasted 3,000 antitank guns and twice that number of artillery pieces.

The commander of the Central Front, Marshal Rokossovsky realized that the enemy's *Schwerpunkt* (decisive thrust) would be made against his right flank. Accordingly, between April and June 1943, his Central Front prepared six main defensive zones with a total of 3,000 miles of trenches to a depth of 90-120 miles.

To insure better cooperation and fire coordination, strong points were combined to form antitank areas. All artillery on the front, including antiaircraft, was concentrated in the sector of the 13th and 70th Armies, where the weight of the German armor was expected to attack. By the day of the battle, the depth of the antitank defense on the right wing reached 19-22 miles incorporating three zones with more than 100 specially constructed antitank strongpoints..

In addition, a dense zone of antitank obstacles, antitank ditches and dragon's teeth (triangular cement blocks) were set up throughout the defense areas. The Soviet troops even built dams to flood certain areas accessible to tanks.

The confidence that Rokossovsky and the other Soviet commanders reposed in their defensive preparations was not misplaced. After German Col. Gen. Model's Ninth Army attacked the Central Front before dawn on July 5, his 13 divisions and 900 tanks (including Tigers and Fer-

Soviets' forward positions. Just before dawn, the main attack began, Tiger tanks in the lead, followed by the unreliable Panthers and assault guns. Never before had the Germans concentrated armor to this extent, an average of 40 tanks to each kilometer of the attack sector. It was a sultry, sun-drenched summer day that parched the soldiers after a few hours of exertion. Artillery on both sides pounded away, making the battlefield very dangerous for infantry in the attack. At best, the German infantry were in thin-sided halftracks, and often they rode atop the tanks, fully exposed to fire. In past offensives, the Germans had usually broken through Soviet defenses in a few days or even hours. But in the Kursk salient there was little hope of ever seeing open country, only layer on layer of minefields and nests of Soviet guns so well concealed that they were seldom spotted until the first German tank was hit. German veterans, many with four years of war behind them, said they had never seen combat as intense.

During the first day, Fourth *Panzer* Army advanced into the important Soviet defensive positions around Oboyan, just 30 miles due south of Kursk. The commander of the Voronezh Front, Lieutenant General Vatutin, strengthened his defense by committing his second echelon, an entire tank army. Vatutin also planned to counterattack on 6 July, but the tank army commander convinced him that he could inflict more damaged on the defense. In many sectors, the Soviets dug their tanks into the ground, sacrificing mobility but making themselves extremely difficult to knock out. Zhukov and Vasilevsky were at Vatutin's headquarters as representatives of the High Command. On their recommendation, fresh forces were brought up, among them the Fifth Guards Tank Army.

On 8 July, II SS *Panzer* Corps renewed the southern-side attack towards Oboyan with Tigers in the lead. As so often before, the Germans displayed a mastery of combined arms warfare. They coordinated their artillery and armor with close air support to crush the Soviet defenders in their path. For the last time on the Eastern Front, the Germans had assembled a great concentration of close-support aircraft, both medium bombers and dive bombers. Outclassed in other theaters, the Junkers-87 "Stuka" was still effective here. Some of the "Stuka" were specially modified as tank busters with 37mm cannon mounted in pods under the wings. They descended like birds of prey, firing their cannon into the vulnerable decks of Soviet tanks caught in the open. But Soviet aviation was equally busy, particularly the Ilyushin-2 "Shturmovik". This was a purpose-built, close-support aircraft armed with 7.62mm machine-guns, two 23mm (later 37mm) cannon, and bomb loads up to 900 kilograms. In characteristic Soviet fashion, the "Shturmovik" had armor protection for the crew and could often withstand multiple hits while still carrying out its mission. In previous offensives, the Germans usually had enjoyed air superiority, but now the noise of aircraft engines overhead was not always a welcome one to the German troops on the ground.

Despite their heavy casualties, the Germans still hoped that a breakthrough might be close at hand. On 11 July, von Manstein regrouped his forces for another attempt. The operational concept was to renew the attack towards Oboyan, thus fixing the Soviet defenders in place, while mounting the main effort toward Prokhorovka, a few miles to the southeast. *Grossdeutschland*, together with the 3rd *Panzer* Division and 11th *Panzer* Division, would continue in the direction of Oboyan, while *Das Reich*, *Totenkopf* and *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* drove towards Prokhorovka. At the same time, Army Detachment Kempf was to move on Prokhorovka from the south, a strategy catching the Soviets in a pincer. When the concept was formulated, the main Soviet force in the Prokhorovka area was the Voronezh First Tank Army. But even as the Germans prepared their operation, a fresh Soviet force was marching into the area: Lt. Gen. Pavel A. Rotmistrov's Fifth Guards Tank Army. Rotmistrov, who had fought at Stalingrad and would end the war as a marshal of the Soviet Union, was one of the Red Army's most experienced armor commanders.

Shown in the diagram is a typical Russian battalion-strength antitank strongpoint at Kursk. The antitank rifles used were the 14.5mm PTRD and PTRS type. By mid-1943, both were only effective at very close ranges, due to the increased depth of German tank armor. For the Soviets, better antitank protection was provided by the 45mm M1942 and the 57mm M1943 antitank guns.

When German tanks ran into an undiscovered minefield, they were faced with two equally undesirable alternatives, they could halt until their assault engineers cleared the minefield by hand using steel rods (metal mine detectors were useless because the battlefield was covered with shell fragments). This meant that the tanks were inviting targets for Soviet antitank guns and antitank rifles while the engineers cleared a path for the tanks. Or the tanks could advance through the minefield and risk being immobilized when a mine blew off a track, thus becoming stationary targets for the Soviet guns. When German infantry attempted to advance without tank support, they suffered excessive casualties.

Even during the battle, the Russians continued to sow mines, thickening minefields from the rear as the Germans cleared pathways for the tanks from the front. By the end of the second day of its assault, Model's Ninth Army had lost more than 10,000 men and hundreds of tanks while making virtually no dent in the second Soviet defensive line.

Model's offensive had been broken in 48 hours, and he was to make no further advances in the battle. For the first time since the Germans invaded Russia, the Soviet Army had repulsed a major German summer offensive. More importantly, the Soviets had destroyed the same armored divisions Germany would require to mount any future major offensive against Russia.

dinand heavy assault guns) made an initial penetration about six miles deep on a 20-mile front by that evening. Although they had broken through the first defensive line, the German tanks and troops still faced an intact Soviet defensive barrier almost 10 miles deep.

TOP: German medium tanks advance through a burning village to a smoke-blackened battlefield in the Kursk salient. ABOVE: The German strategy at Kursk was predictable. It called for massive armored thrusts from the north and the south at the "neck" of the Kursk salient to cut off and destroy the more than one million Soviet troops and their equipment inside. The German operation was launched in hopes of repeating the great battles of encirclement that came earlier on the Eastern Front, such as those at Minsk, Smolensk and Kiev.

The crisis came on 11 and 12 July as the greatest single armor battle in history. On 11 July, the Germans renewed their offensive towards Prokhorovka in a driving rainstorm. The furious ground battle was accompanied by an equally furious battle in the sky, despite the poor flying weather. The German armor ran into not only First Tank Army, but elements of Rotmistrov's army, itself preparing to attack on the following day.

Early on 12 July, Rotmistrov positioned himself on a hill where he could observe the corridor he had selected for his counterattack. To Rotmistrov's right lay a small river, to his left a steep railway embankment, and down the corridor between these obstacles moved the T-34 tanks of his command. No sooner had their advance begun, when to Rotmistrov's astonishment German armor swung into the same corridor from the opposite end. It was the II SS *Panzer* Corps, including about 100 Tiger tanks, beginning an assault towards Prokhorovka. With both sides already in assault formation, a head-on clash was inevitable. Obviously, too, generalship would not mean much in this battle. The issue would be decided by small units and individual tank crews, all locked in a headlong struggle that allowed no retreat.

On paper, the Soviet T-34 was no match for a German Tiger tank, but in the confused fighting of July 12, 1943, the Soviets were able to fight on nearly even terms. At the time, of course, no tank could fire accurately on the move. The Tigers halted their advance in order to bring their powerful 88mm guns to bear. The Soviet tankers maneuvered their agile T-34s around and through the clusters of German tanks.

From his hilltop vantage point, Rotmistrov could see his men using small thickets and folds in the ground to mask their movements. While Soviet shells often failed to penetrate the Tiger's massive frontal armor, the tank was vulnerable from the sides and back, where the Soviet tanks began to appear. All day the tankers fought, their tracks ripping up the ground, turrets slewing wildly, and main guns blasting at point-blank range. Never had there been an armor battle quite like this before. The ranges were so short that many hits had catastrophic consequences, igniting fuel and stored rounds. Tanks then exploded internally with great force, often hurling their turrets into the air.

All through the day and well into the night the battle raged, and no one could be sure which side was winning. Finally, around midnight, the gunfire slackened and a thunderstorm broke with lightning flickering over the ghastly field. Strewn in the rain lay the wreckage of about 70 Tigers and more than 200 other German tanks. More than half of Rotmistrov's tanks also lay in ruins—his losses thus were somewhat greater than those of the Germans. Neither side could fairly claim to have won the battle, but the operational result favored the Soviets. They had met the strongest armor force that von Manstein could muster and they had stopped it dead.

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On July 17, Hitler ordered the II SS *Panzer* Corps out of the line to refit and redeploy to Italy. The last great German offensive in the East was ended. By late July, the Soviets had forced the Germans back to their start positions for Operation CITADEL. In August, the Soviets began their first great summer offensive. It soon became a race for the Dnieper River, where the exhausted Germans were finally able to make a stand. The Red Army had the initiative and would never relinquish it to the end of the war. □

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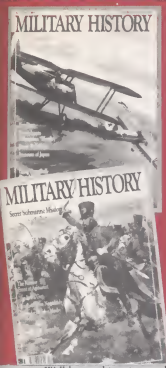

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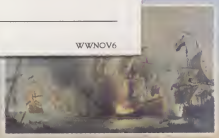

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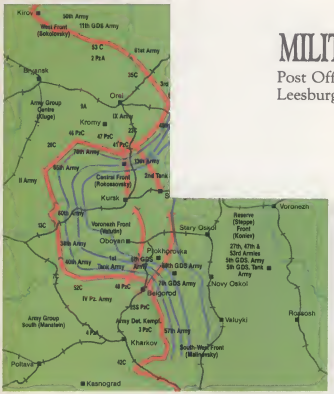

TOP: German medium tanks advance through a burning village to a smoke-blackened battlefield in the Kursk salient. ABOVE: The German strategy at Kursk was predictable. It called for massive armored thrusts from the north and the south at the "neck" of the Kursk salient to cut off and destroy the more than one million Soviet troops and their equipment inside. The German operation was launched in hopes of repeating the great battles of encirclement that came earlier on the Eastern Front, such as those at Minsk, Smolensk and Kiev.

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WWNOM96

How American planners made use of the Ultra interception of the Nazi Codes

By Peter Wirth

In 1974 *The Ultra Secret*, a book by the British officer Fred W. Winterbotham, revealed for the first time one of the best-kept secrets of World War II: that the British had succeeded in breaking top-level Nazi ciphers and so were reading the secret German codes. This triumph of spying let the Allies anticipate German moves; it was a major factor in winning the war.

Thomas Parrish's book *The Ultra Americans: The U.S. Role in Breaking the Nazi Codes* (Stein and Day, 1986, $19.95) tells the story once again, with emphasis on American intelligence and its contribution to the British enterprise.

Parrish adds some new details: the capture by the Germans of an American general who knew about Ultra, but remained silent; General George S. Patton, Jr.'s use of Ultra information in his spectacular breakout in Normandy; the seizure, at the very end of the war, of the "Russian Fish," a machine used by the Germans to break Russian ciphers—and therefore a potential U.S. asset in the first stage of the Cold War.

Mostly, though, Parrish covers familiar ground, with documents and interviews to fill out the picture. His style is chatty and his metaphors too cute, and the American activities on which he dwells were only a small part of a basically British operation. But he provides a solid and sometimes absorbing introduction to his subject.

Parrish has an epigraph from Frederick the Great, the first modern ruler to set up a real system of military intelligence: "Know the mind of the opposing generals in order better to divine their actions, to know how to impose your actions upon them, and to know what traps to use against them."

The Ultra Americans, however, deals with a more limited area of intelligence than this epigraph would lead one to expect. The focus is on cryptology and cryptanalysis, the making and breaking of codes and ciphers. (Codes transform a message word by word; ciphers, which are much harder to crack, transform a message letter by letter "into what appears to be utter gibberish.")

A shivering crewman of a U.S. M-36 tank destroyer surveys the vehicle-clogged road ahead during the Battle of the Bulge as a disabled M-10 tank destroyer sits on the roadside. Despite the Allies' possession of the ULTRA code-breaking capacity, the German offensive completely surprised the Americans, chiefly due to the Germans' extraordinary security precautions.

When the Signal Intelligence Service of the United States Army was founded in 1930, these activities were marginal, but they would soon grow in importance. The Enigma, an electromechanical enciphering machine, had gone on the market in the 1920s, and the Germans adapted it for their purposes. Random wiring and the use of three movable rotors and a stationary wheel generated complex ciphers which would be changed every day. The Poles had remarkable success in analyzing these ciphers, and in the dark days before World War II they shared their knowledge with the British and French. Meanwhile the Americans had done well with Japanese ciphers.

During World War II, American cryptanalysts and translators, under William Bundy and Telford Taylor, worked along with the British at the Government Code and Cipher School at Bletchley Park, near London. (Lewis F. Powell, Jr., the future Supreme Court justice, was also a member of the team). Every day intercepted German messages had to be studied until the daily cipher was broken.

Then it became a question of exploiting the secret information in such a way that the Germans would not be alerted. Fortunately, the German high command had so much confidence in the Enigma machine that it apparently never did catch on to the fact that its ciphers were being broken day after day.

The Ultra messages—short for Ultra Secret—helped with the Battle of Britain and particularly with outwitting German U-Boats in the Battle of the Atlantic. Before Ultra entered the field, the "wolf-pack" strategy of Admiral Karl Dönitz, together with weak Allied convoys and lax security on the East Coast of the United States, allowed the Germans to wreak havoc on Allied shipping in the Atlantic.

Jochen Mohr, one of the boldest of the U-boat commanders, boasted in rhyme: "The new-moon night is black as ink./Off Hatteras the tankers sink/While sadly Roosevelt counts the score:/Some fifty thousand tons—by Mohr."

Once Ultra was used to decipher German naval messages, the U-boats found it much more difficult to attack unprotected ships. The movements of U-boats were now predictable, and the hunter became the hunted.

Later in the war, eavesdropping by way of Ultra allowed Allied generals to know what the Germans were doing in France both before and after D-Day. When a fictitious Allied army group was created in southeastern England before D-Day, Ultra made sure that it

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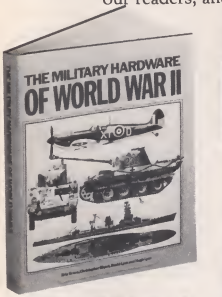

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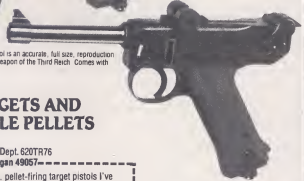

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had accomplished its mission of fooling the Germans into thinking that the main Allied landing would come in the Pas-de-Calais, not in Normandy.

But Ultra produced results only when its information was properly evaluated and disseminated. Hints warning of the German counterattack in the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), like earlier hints of Pearl Harbor from intercepted Japanese sources, led nowhere because no one interpreted them in time. Part of the interest of *The Ultra Americans* lies in the conflict between regular military men who were suspicious of Ultra and those officers and politicians—Winston Churchill was one—who understood the enormous value of being able to look into your enemy's mind.

Poland in the Second World War
By Józef Garliński, Hippocrene Books, 1985, $25.

No nation suffered more severely than Poland in World War II, not even the Soviet Union with more than 20 million casualties. Proportionately, Poland's losses were as great. More important, Poland, and Poland alone, had the misfortune of having to fight against *both* Axis and Allied powers, against both Germany and Russia. World War II, of course, began when on September 1, 1939, the armies of the Third Reich invaded Poland. Less carefully remembered is the fact that on September 17, the Soviet Union invaded Poland, as well.

The two nations then proceeded to divide the country in accordance with the secret clauses of the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement. Occupation by the Nazis proved a good deal more brutal than occupation by Soviet forces, but the Soviet presence proved more long-lasting, largely because of the wartime policies of the Allies, who were, for various reasons, unwilling to press Stalin on the Polish question.

Organized and overt Polish resistance to the briefer, German presence was overcome in a matter of weeks—despite the undoubted courage and gallantry of emigré Polish units in the West (and Polish units in the East fighting under Soviet direction). The contribution of Polish troops to the final overthrow of Nazi Germany was more symbolic than decisive in any strictly military sense. For this reason—and perhaps because a close examination of what happened to Poland can be an unsettling experience for Western readers—relatively little has been written in England or America about Poland's wartime role. This is a deficiency which Józef Garliński's

Poland in the Second World War quite capably seeks to remedy.

Garliński knows his subject first hand. Arrested by the Gestapo in Poland, he spent two years in concentration camps and now serves as a professor of history at the Polish University in Exile, London. His work, accordingly, is informed with the passion of a patriot and a partisan, at once a strength and a weakness: a strength because he speaks from within and is able to chart the changing hopes and plans of Polish Resistance leaders with the authority of personal memory; a weakness because, at times, his account of political disputes and personality conflicts between influential figures in the Polish underground, in the Polish goverment-in-exile in London, and in its counterpart in Soviet territory, is so intimate and detailed that it threatens to lose the general reader. No doubt much was said, and no doubt a great deal was at stake. But not much was really done (except perhaps by the Underground). That was not the fault of the figures involved, who dearly wished for a more active role. But that was the nature of the case—it is hard to fight with much effect from within a conquered territory.

Garliński is at his best in recreating

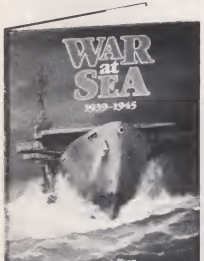
The Poles did their best against the Germans but, alone, it was not enough.

the tumultuous weeks immediately preceding and following the outbreak of the war. We tend to forget that, in 1939, France still enjoyed the hard-won prestige she had gained at the Marne, at Verdun, and in the Foch Offensive. In World War I it was France that bore the brunt of the German onslaught and finally triumphed in spite of all, and Russia that crumpled under the strain. The sudden Fall of France, accordingly, was to Poland a bitterly disappointing surprise. Even more so since the Poles had hoped for a major French *offensive* in 1939, diverting German forces to the West and giving Poland a breathing space.

Garliński is very good in describing the abortive Warsaw Uprising, when, with the Red Army at the Warsaw suburbs, the Polish Underground attempted to take the capital in order to assure a free post-war Poland. The Soviets had encouraged the revolt, but for the two months that the uprising lasted, the Red Army did virtually nothing to help. Russian forces took the city only after organized Polish resistance had been extinguished (and the fund of non-Communist resistance leaders had been accordingly—and brutally—depleted).

The Western powers made no effective protest—they felt they could not while the war continued. For better or for worse, Soviet aid against Hitler was indispensable—and Soviet aid against Japan was hoped for, particularly before the successful testing of the atomic bomb. Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill was willing to endanger the fragile accord with Stalin on Poland's behalf— not when it was discovered in 1943 that Soviet forces had executed some 10,000 Polish officers in 1940 near the village of Katyń, not during the Warsaw Uprising, and not even after the war in Europe. Understandable as coalition policy, perhaps, but a bitter situation for Poles, and the origin of bitter legacy—which in his most moving pages Garliński relentlessly explores.

Timothy Baker Shutt



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UnderCover

Continued from page 8

the four headings would throw the American fighters off for miles. The air-speed indicator, tachometer, compass, and his GI wristwatch had to work perfectly. The slightest headwind could take him off course. And finally, the Japanese pilots had to be on time, as well.

The decoded itinerary called for Yamamoto to arrive at Buin on the southern coast of Bougainville in a "Betty" bomber escorted by six Zeros. When the quarry was sighted, the cover flight would climb to 16,000 feet, while the killer section made its attack. According to Mitchell's plan, the interception would occur at 9:35 a.m. They would have only five to ten minutes in the target area before their fuel supply became crucial.

After picking and briefing his pilots, Mitchell spoke briefly with the B-24 pilots from Port Moresby who had flown in the extra fuel tanks earlier in the evening. "It's the wackiest mission I ever ran," he told them. "When I stop to think about it, I know the damn thing will never work."

Takeoff the next morning was at 7:10. Mitchell rolled down the runway first, followed by Jack Jacobson, his wingman, and then Doug Canning and D.C. Goerke. The killer group was next: Tom Lanphier, Rex Barber, Jim McLanahan and Joe Moore. As McLanahan rolled down the steel matting of Fighter (runway) Number Two, however, his P-38 suddenly lurched to the side with a blown tire. Several minutes later, after the other ten fighters had taken off and joined formation, Joe Moore discovered a malfunction with his drop tanks—when he switched from his main tanks, his engine sputtered and died. Moore dropped out of formation and returned to Guadalcanal. Besby Holmes and Ray Hine joined the killer section. Mitchell's force was now down to just 16 planes.

Once past the Russell Islands, flying almost due west, the P-38 Lightnings went down to wave-top level to avoid radar detection. The formation loosened up to avoid the strain of close-formation flying so near the water. The weather was perfect, with only a slight wind and absolutely clear skies. The P-38s skimmed across the empty sea, so low that they left wakes behind them like power boats.

Doug Canning, flying behind Mitchell, happened to spot a huge shark in the clear water. On the flight out he would see 48 sharks and a manta ray, which he guessed weighed over a ton.

By eight o'clock Mitchell's fighters had flown 116 miles in 35 minutes. At that exact moment, 500 miles to the northwest, a new twin-engined Betty bomber bearing Admiral Yamamoto rose from Lakunai airfield near Rabaul. It was escorted by six Zero fighters of the 204th Naval Air Squadron, based at Rabaul, and accompanied by a second bomber, which carried Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, Yamamoto's Chief of Staff. The eight aircraft swept through the faint, smoky haze from nearby volcanoes and roared across Blanche Bay.

Several Japanese officers watched anxiously as the small fleet disappeared over the horizon. In the days before the flight, several officers had expressed concern about the danger involved. Rear Admiral Takaji Joshima, Commander of the 11th Air Flotilla, had even flown in from Bougainville to urge cancellation of the flight. Yamamoto, laughing, had dismissed the danger. He couldn't turn back now, Yamamoto told Joshima, because everyone was expecting his visit. "I have to go," Yamamoto had said.

At 8:20 Mitchell made his first change of course by pointing to the new direction—absolute radio silence was necessary. The gesture was passed back visually through the formation, and the P-38s turned to the northwest. Mitchell, drenched with sweat from the sun pouring through his P-38's big glass canopy, glanced continuously from his altimeter to his temperature gauge, from his watch to the compass, and then at the ocean just in front and beneath him.

The second leg of the course was flown for less than half an hour, the third for 38 minutes. At that point the Americans had been in the air for two hours, and if Mitchell's calculations were correct, they were about 40 miles to the southwest of Bougainville. So far Mitchell and the others had seen no ships, no other planes, not even a bird. Several minutes after Mitchell turned the squadron to the northeast, he began a long, slow climb. The P-38 pilots test-fired their guns as they all rose above the empty sea.

From his cockpit, Mitchell strained to see land ahead. The sky above was clear; visibility seemed to be almost unlimited. Mitchell was thinking that he must have strayed off course when his aircraft rose abruptly from the deceptive haze near the ocean's surface. Ahead was a towering green mountain range surrounded by jungle just east of Empress Augustus Bay—Bougainville,

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exactly where he had planned.

The time was 9:34.

Mitchell and company were one minute early.

A moment later Doug Canning broke radio silence with this message: "Bogeys eleven o'clock." Then Canning added: "High."

Mitchell saw the eight enemy planes against the backdrop of the mountains with a sense of exhilaration. The bombers, sparkling in the morning sun, looked new and shiny. Mitchell called for everyone to shed their drop tanks and then began climbing to 16,000 feet to take the cover position. He radioed Lanphier: "All right, Tom. Go get him. He's your meat."

The Japanese fighter escort was divided into two groups of three fighters each; one trio was close to the bombers, and the other was flying farther to the rear. Chief Petty Officer Okazaki, in the lead plane of the second group, was the first to sight the P-38s climbing to attack. He dived, pulled up in front of the bombers, and pointed toward the American fighters.

Lanphier, seeing that the Zeros would reach him and Barber before they could attack the bombers, pulled up and fired. His action allowed Barber to continue the attack alone. Barber went after the bombers but overshot. He banked to the right and cut his throttle. When he came level again, Barber found a bomber directly in front of him. He began firing and raked his guns from the right engine across the fuselage to the left engine as a piece of the rudder came off. One of the Zero pilots, Kenji Yanagiya, saw Admiral Yamamoto's aircraft begin to leak gasoline, followed by black smoke and flames. Barber hurtled over the wounded bomber as three Zeros came at him from his right.

Lanphier, having flown upward through the other Zeros, looked down and spotted a shadow moving across the treetops. He dived, pursued by a pair of Zeros, and went into a skid to cut his speed. Before he thought he was in range, Lanphier fired a long burst at the bomber from nearly right angles. The bomber, passing in front of him, lost a wing, plunged into the jungle, and exploded.

About two miles away, Admiral Ugaki in the second bomber had watched in horror as flames engulfed Yamamoto's aircraft. Ugaki's own bomber was now under attack and took violent evasive action. When Ugaki was able to look again, he saw only a column of black smoke rising out of the dense green of the jungle. High overhead, John Mitchell looked

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto is shown in his dress uniform in this painting by Shugaku Homma.

down and saw the same fire.

Ugaki's bomber was attacked over the ocean by Besby Holmes, his drop tanks now free, and by Ray Hine. Barber, having escaped the Zeros, watched as Holmes fired into the second bomber's right engine. When Holmes and Hine then shot past the Betty, Barber dropped in behind the bomber and fired, causing an explosion. The pilot tried to make a crash landing in the sea—the bomber broke apart on impact. Incredibly, three men survived: the pilot, a rear admiral and Ugaki, who was pulled from the water with serious injuries.

The American fighters still engaged in dogfights broke away when Mitchell radioed: "Let's get the hell out and go home." There were a few whoops of triumph on the radio, but it soon fell silent. Lanphier flew alone on a direct route to Guadalcanal at high altitude. Mitchell and Jacobson headed back together at 10,000 feet. They landed an hour and a half later amid a scene of happy pandemonium. Excited groups of mechanics, pilots, U.S. Marines and Army soldiers greeted each plane. Unnoticed in the crowd was a young torpedo boat skipper named John Kennedy, briefly in port, who had watched the first returning P-38s do victory rolls over the runway.

The impromptu celebration lasted all afternoon and well into the night. It was dampened only by the failure of Ray Hine to return. No one had seen him go down, although Mitchell had chased a Zero off the tail of a P-38 in trouble near the water shortly before leaving the combat area.

The next day Third U.S. Fleet Commander William F. ("Bull") Halsey sent a message to Rear Admiral Marc Mitscher on Guadalcanal: "Congratulations to you and Major Mitchell and his hunters—sounds as though one of the ducks in their bag was a peacock." Halsey also ordered that the mission be kept top secret in hopes that the Japanese still would not realize that their code had been broken.

To the north that same day, the Japanese were also busily engaged in keeping a secret. Search parties were told only that "top navy brass" had been aboard the downed plane. The crash site, in dense jungle, was finally reached near dusk on the 19th by a Seventeenth Army detachment under the command of a Second Lieutenant Hamasuna. He and his men found several bodies scattered around the wreckage.

One of the bodies was that of a high-ranking officer. Unlike the others, he was still strapped in his seat, which had been thrown clear of the plane. A machine-gun bullet had entered at the angle of his lower left jaw and emerged at the right; he also had been struck in the left shoulder blade. Hamasuna identified the officer as Admiral Yamamoto by a diary and a large number of poems found on the corpse. Wearing white gloves, Yamamoto in death grasped his sword with his left hand while his right rested upon it.

The Japanese high command kept Yamamoto's death a closely guarded secret for well over a month. One of the few in Tokyo to learn of the admiral's death was Admiral Mineichi Koga, Yamamoto's designated successor. Yamamoto's family was not informed until May 18.

Three days later the Japanese public learned of the tragedy. The radio announcement was brief: "Admiral Yamamoto, while directing general strategy in the front line in April of this year, engaged in combat with the enemy and met gallant death in a war plane." The announcer's voice was choked with emotion. Then he wept.

In the days immediately following the admiral's fatal flight, several insistent messages were sent from Rabaul and Truk to Tokyo suggesting that the Americans must have broken the JN-25 code. The timing of the attack, it was argued by some, could not have been coincidental.

In response, Tokyo's code experts insisted that such a thing was impossible. Only years later, would they—along with the rest of the world—realize that the impossible had indeed been accomplished, both in a code room in Hawaii and in the skies over a remote Pacific island, where fate and Major John Mitchell had planned a deadly rendezvous. □

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Armament

Continued from page 15

captured enemy rifles and set out with new enthusiasm. As German Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt reported in 1944: "From January, the state of affairs . . . in France has become so dangerous that all commanders report cases where whole formations of troops . . . were surrounded by bands (of Resistance fighters), and, in isolated regions were simply killed off by automatic weapons tactics."

Thousands of the Sten Mark II and Mark III weapons were supplied to irregular forces behind German lines. According to records of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), Britain's behind-enemy-lines outfit, thousands of parachute canisters were air-dropped into occupied Europe in 1944 and 1945. Each contained two Mark II or Mark III Stens, six loaded magazines, and cleaning materials. A simplified, illustrated manual was provided for the untrained troops receiving the weapons.

Because the Sten gun was simple, compact, and quickly disassembled, it lent itself to dozens of clandestine combat uses. Stories abound of Sten guns being smuggled into action in picnic baskets, pet cages, bakery shipments, handbags, bicycle parts kits, even in women's undergarments.

If the British couldn't supply enough Sten guns, European and Asian resistance movements quickly set up shops to produce their own modified, home-built versions of the weapon—designs which are still in use today in remote parts of the world. Even the Germans copied the Sten design, calling it MP-3008. Perhaps, though, a more remarkable project was the German forgery of the Sten, complete with bogus official British inspection and proofing stamps. These guns were intended for issue to German guerrilla units operating behind Allied lines from late 1944 till the end of the war.

The Sten is probably the most copied submachine gun design in history. Today, copies of Sten guns are still produced in Africa, the Middle East and Far East. Afghan rebels now are using well-made copies of Sten guns against Soviet troops.

The most mysterious modification of the Sten is the silenced model known as the MkIIS. Considerably more of these guns were produced than is usually officially acknowledged, and many of them are still around today. "We made them mostly for airdrops in occupied Europe during World War II," a British officer

Winston "machine-gun" Churchill (he was also photographed carrying a Tommy gun) fires a prototype MK II Sten gun in June 1941. Churchill, like Hitler, was personally concerned with the quality of the weapons his armies used but, unlike Der Führer, *was willing and eager to test some of them himself.*

related. "But they keep turning up all these years later where there's trouble—Israel, Cyprus, Algeria, the whole Middle East, all over Asia, and in Ireland."

This silenced submachine gun is *still* the standard weapon with which other silenced submachine guns are compared . . . despite the fact it is officially a museum relic. Or, as one young British officer, a veteran of Northern Ireland, recently told reporters: "My old man said his Commando unit used silenced Stens when they hit Dieppe in 1942. The IRA is using the same type of bloody damn gun against us now."

No story of the Sten gun is complete without noting the cost, or lack thereof, involved in producing the unique series of submachine gun designs. In today's era, with the costs of small arms skyrocketing, the small amount once spent for the Sten gun is almost beyond belief. At the height of production in England, the Sten Mark II was produced at a cost of just $6.97 per weapon, while the Canadian version cost $12.77 per unit, because of better quality materials and less automated workmanship.

In addition to the better grade of steel and workmanship, the Canadian Sten guns are considered by most experts to have a more refined and smooth finish to their manufacture. As one British officer wrote after the war, however: "It was far safer and simpler for the Canadians to do a prettier job with their Stens. They had no bombs falling on them, subcontractors getting blown out of business weekly, and they could always turn to

America for more help."

At the end of the war, the British government sold thousands of surplus Sten guns for between $14 and $18 each. It is estimated that while nearly two million such weapons of all makes were sold, the British government holds still nearly 750,000 Stens in storage today.

History has proven the Sten a highly successful combat weapon. Designed for temporary, emergency use after Dunkirk, the Sten series lasted as the standard British submachine gun through the Korean conflict and is still in action today. As the respected British ordnance writer Ian V. Hogg has noted: "Its introduction was greeted with some reserve by soldiers accustomed to more elegant products, but its perfomance in battle showed that looks count for little and the initial misgivings soon died away."

What of the U.S. Army and the Sten? Certainly, numbers of American troops used the British weapon in combat. Shortly after America officially entered World War II, ordnance officials gave brief consideration to adopting the Sten design for use in the U.S. military. The weapons were evaluated at Aberdeen Proving Ground and did very well in objective testing, but were criticized because of their unorthodox appearance. A resultant report stated: "The Sten demonstrated . . . that an efficient submachine gun could be made at small unit cost and by rapid production-line methods. Officers of the Small Arms Development Branch realized that in modern warfare there are other criteria than mere appearance."

However, the U.S. decided to develop its own Sten-type weapon and came up with the M-3 and M-3A1 submachine guns. The late expert John Weeks once remarked, "Comparing the Thompson or the Greasegun with the Sten is like pitting very delicate children of the aristocracy against a virile, hardy ragamuffin from England's slums."

While some contemporary critics find the Sten crude and rough, it is still regarded by many experts as a simple, robust and effective weapon. Its combat record supports that claim. The Sten has been in almost continuous combat since 1942, either as an original gun, imitation, or weapon assembled from spare parts. It is still found in active arsenals all over the world. As international firearms expert Thomas Nelson has written, "That crude, old Sten can kill you just as effectively as the most expensive, modern weapon today." □

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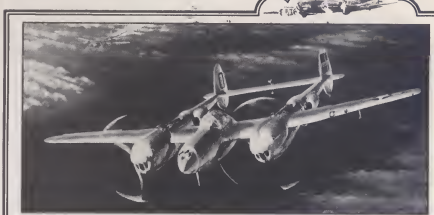

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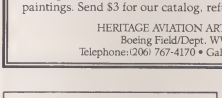

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Personality

Continued from page 10

hungered to read something lighthearted to offset the dismal war news. Hundreds of newspapers, from metropolitan dailies to hinterland weeklies, were buying his output of words.

Ernie Pyle liked everything about what he was doing; the creative freedom, the money it paid, the opportunity to talk with ordinary people, and to have his wife Jerry—he always called her "That Girl" in his columns—with him as they explored together the highways and byways of the country. The most remote thing in his mind was becoming a war correspondent.

This changed abruptly in early 1943. Pyle was drafted for service in the armed forces. Uncle Sam apparently didn't feel that writing a travel column was essential to the war effort. Despite his age, his small physique, his many real and imagined illnesses, Pyle passed the physical. Then he was given a six-month deferment, with the proviso that he would become a war correspondent for the Scripps-Howard newspapers and syndicate.

Thus began, as it is remembered, the saga and legend of Ernie Pyle.

"That Girl," meanwhile, was Geraldine Siebolds, a government civil-service clerk Ernie had married while he worked for Scripps-Howard's *Washington News* during the mid-1930s. She first had become known to readers of his travel column, but was to become famous across the country when he started writing from the battlefronts of North Africa and Europe.

It was a tumultuous marriage. From the start Jerry had shown troubling signs of a changing, dark mentality. In time her deep shadows spiraled into debilitating physical illness, and her lifestyle fluctuated from seemingly normal to stays of varying length in sanitariums, heavy solitary drinking bouts, psychiatric treatments and a suicide attempt.

It was a torment for both; a screeching roller coaster of often violent scenes and flaming emotions that rose and fell, then rose again through a divorce and a following remarriage by proxy. He was in London; she in their Albuquerque, N.M., home. At times, while Ernie was sharing the miseries and dangers of combat with frontline GIs, weeks passed when he didn't hear from her except through letters from mutual friends.

Ernie, too, had his jousts with the bottle, but he never missed a deadline because of booze. In the words of Hal

Ernie Pyle shares cigarettes with U.S. Marines on Okinawa ten days before his death on April 18, 1945. Pyle only spent a few months in the Pacific Theater, where most of the combat troops were Marines. Ironically enough, however, he died among those he had cherished and celebrated—the U.S. Army GIs.

Boyle, his oft-times drinking buddy: "It was just that when he did it, he often did it up damned good. But didn't we all?"

Letters to Lee G. Miller, his close friend and Scripps-Howard boss, recounted some of the escapades. There were exhilarating sessions of "guzzling and singing raucous ditties;" others when he wasn't sure how he made it to bed. There is every indication that the drinking and the tone of the sessions—exuberance and drunken stupor—was a sharp mirror of the current state of affairs with "That Girl."

As Miller wrote in his biography *The Story of Ernie Pyle*: "His constant love for Jerry was strong enough to withstand the greatest stress to which a marriage can be subjected." Was it to relieve this awful torture, and save the marriage, that Ernie Pyle packed up and went to the Pacific?

Pyle was 45—physically beat and mentally at wit's end in early 1945. He had written Miller: "If I heard one more shot and saw one more dead man, I'd go off my nut." The long-ago Hoosier farm boy, now the beloved GI's Boswell, had returned to the States from Europe not intending to see any more combat; any more misery and death in battle.

Ernie Pyle didn't want to go on now to the Pacific.

But he was under heavy pressure from the Scripps-Howard syndicate and the hundreds of newspaper clients that carried his column to write about the war against Japan.

An avalanche of letters from parents, relatives and friends of servicemen pleaded with him to, as one poignant appeal from Valentine, Neb., said, "carry on until final victory is won, just as our boys must carry on." The mounting chant was taken up by high brass of the armed forces.

"One story by Ernie Pyle can do more to boost morale of fighting men than a hundred USO shows," a top Marine general wrote the chain's chief, Roy Howard. Hal Boyle later said that the pressure was even applied from the White House.

Thus in late January 1945, Ernie Pyle left "That Girl" in Albuquerque and set out for the Pacific War.

"He practically was hand-carried to Guam where Admiral Chester Nimitz had his headquarters," Lisle Shoemaker, a United Press correspondent and a longtime friend, recalled. Nimitz was Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, and was then marshalling U.S. naval power and Marines for the assaults on Iwo Jima and Okinawa, while also planning for the climactic invasion of the Japanese homeland later.

Pyle was disconcerted and disenchanted with what he found at CINCPAC Headquarters. Nimitz and his staff insisted on treating him as a full-blown celebrity. Commander Max Miller, a peacetime newsman crony and author from San Diego, was assigned as a constant personal escort whose main duty, Pyle felt, was to protect him from everyone on the island but the admiral.

He was an almost nightly but reluctant guest for cocktails and dinner with top military brass and visiting civilian bigwigs from the U.S. mainland gathered at Nimitz's plush quarters—a newly-constructed clapboard

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Clearly disgruntled and out of his element—he was permitted to spend hardly any time with enlisted men—Pyle wrote columns reflecting his pique. The men on Guam, he wrote, slept on inner-spring mattresses and ate hot, good chow—some offices and quarters were even air-conditioned.

In an interview with an Army sergeant reporter for *Stars and Stripes*, he said: "I appreciate the monotony you GIs face. But I can't go overboard on sympathy. Not after I've seen the misery and cold and death in Europe." Pyle apparently didn't know that, a few miles across the island, two divisions of Marines were living in dirt-floored tents, eating C-rations, sleeping on folding cots, and had lost nearly half of their men in recent bloody campaigns against the Japanese.

His columns didn't sit well with many readers in the States, and the clippings found their way back to the Pacific. His attitude was especially resented after the horrible losses of the Marines at Iwo Jima, a campaign that claimed more than 25,000 American casualties while he was comfortably at sea with a mighty naval task force raiding the Japanese homeland.

Of this confusing and unfortunate period, one newsman critic later wrote that "Ernie's writing lost its quality in the Pacific because he resented the assignment." Another wondered if the big money he'd earned in Europe didn't have something to do with it. Pyle's income in 1944—from his syndicated column, four books and a motion picture—was said to exceed half a million dollars. He wrote Lee Miller that his federal income tax for the year would be $105,000.

But none of this was in keeping with the character of the man and his unabashed love for American GIs—soldiers, sailors and Marines. What happened, purely and simply, was that Ernie Pyle had seen too much of war and its brutality. He had lost too many friends to violent deaths and wanted nothing more to do with it.

More words from Lisle Shoemaker, who had just returned from the bloodbath of Iwo Jima: "Ernie decided reluctantly to go with the Marines to Okinawa. He really didn't want to go and insisted this would be his last landing—absolutely the last."

The night before Pyle boarded ship for the invasion, Shoemaker looked in on Pyle, whose quarters were next to

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his in a Quonset hut on the hill below Admiral Nimitz's headquarters.

"He was standing in the middle of the room," the United Press man recalled, "and he was sorting his gear into two stacks. One large pile consisted of a couple of duffel bags, some luggage and boxes and a leather briefcase. The small stack was his typewriter and bed roll."

"What are you doing?" Shoemaker asked him.

"Separating my stuff," was the answer. "I'm sending all this extra gear back to Albuquerque."

"How come?"

"Because I'm going to get killed on this operation."

When Okinawa was invaded on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, Ernie Pyle was with an early wave of Marines on the beachhead. The First and Sixth Marine Divisions spearheaded the assault by the United States Tenth Army. He went ashore with John N. Popham, a Marine captain who later would become the distinguished executive editor of *The Chattanooga Times* in Tennessee. The landing there was virtually unopposed.

Four decades later Popham described Pyle's joyful reaction:

"He was very, very happy and talked incessantly of how few dead and wounded he'd seen on the beach, and how glad he was that casualties were light. He laughed a lot and chuckled about how much he had enjoyed a picnic lunch of turkey wings and fresh oranges on an island 350 miles from the Japanese homeland."

Pyle took leave from the Leathernecks to join an Army outfit after several days covering Marine frontline action, leaving behind the bed roll containing most of his personal gear. He'd pick it up later. The bed roll was inked with letters—obviously from a fountain pen—no more than an inch high that spelled out "Ernie Pyle." Those Marines who had seen other reporters' combat baggage were quick to notice that most sported big-lettered names and "War Correspondent" stenciled in bright colors.

The flyspeck island of Ie Shima wasn't expected to be much, a minor flanking operation in the overall battle plan to wrest Okinawa from the Japanese. But Pyle said he wanted to go along "just for the ride" and to write some copy about the soldiers, his beloved "dogfaces" who might be wounded or killed on a tiny island that otherwise might not get much coverage.

Shortly after noon on April 18, 1945, on that flyspeck Pacific island two miles offshore from Okinawa, a lone Japanese soldier set the sights of his light Nambu machine gun on a small caravan of U.S. Army vehicles moving slowly on a dusty road just below his hidden sniper's nest.

Three trucks were in front of two jeeps. The enemy gunner waited until all, except the tail-end vehicle, had passed through his field of fire. Then he zeroed in on the last jeep and fired a burst that kicked up little geysers of dirt in the field alongside the narrow, dusty road.

The five men in the jeep leaped for cover. The driver found his in a ditch on one side, and the others slammed to the ground across the road. One man raised his head to see what was happening. He called out: "Is everyone all right?" The Japanese triggered another short staccato burst.

He killed Ernest Taylor Pyle with a single bullet in the right temple.

When a Marine corporal who had driven the reporter around the front heard of his death, he said: "It seems such a shame that such a big man had to get it on such a lousy little island." A sergeant who had ridden shot-gun on these forays into danger said: "I sure am glad Ernie spent some time with us Marines, but I guess as long as it had to happen, it was best he got it with the Army boys. He sure loved them and they sure loved him."

The morning after Pyle was killed, Captain Popham and several of his grief-stricken men checked the correspondent's bed roll. It held just his shoes, underwear, knit caps, sewing kit, some public relations news releases, khaki pants, flashlight, belt and canteens, socks, felt-lined slippers, some toilet articles, and several spools of the dental floss he always used, morning and night.

There was only one intimately personal item; some bright-colored seashells strung on a silvery chain. He probably had bought it at the staging area for the invasion, where the island natives sold such items, or it had been given him by some sailor or Marine aboard ship. It was something he had stuffed away as a souvenir of this trip, his last one.

"We wrapped up the shell necklace at once and sent it on to be delivered to 'That Girl,'" Popham recalled.

On Ie Shima, meanwhile, Ernie Pyle's beloved GIs marked his passing their own way. Placing a simple monument at the spot he was killed, they inscribed on it a few simple words in the best Ernie Pyle tradition:

"At this spot, the 77th Infantry Division lost a buddy—Ernie Pyle, 18 April 1945." □

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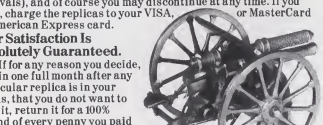

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